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December 2015 • Rs. 150  
(Total 156 pages)INSIDE  
42 PAGES ON THE ART, CRAFT &  
EMOTIONS OF STREET PHOTOGRAPHY

# Better Photography

Better Technique. Better Insight. Better Pictures

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**EXCLUSIVE TESTS**

Tamron SP 45mm f/1.8 VC

Tokina 24–70mm f/2.8

Nikkor 200–500mm f/5.6E VR

## THE UNPREDICTABILITY & MAGIC OF **STREET PHOTOGRAPHY**

We speak to 10 emerging street photography talents to know their motivations, tips, techniques

**ON ASSIGNMENT**

The journey of Amit Mehra's iPhone photobook 'Roznaama'

**YOUR PICTURES**

Intimate, soulful family photos sent in to us by our readers

**CELLPHONE PROFILE**

Bredun Edwards' dream-like vignettes from daily urban life

**PROFILE**

S L Shanthkumar on his hunger for the perfect offbeat moment

**Network 18**

## EDITORIAL

**"I am after mastery of what I want to do; that is, I want to be able to do what I want to do, and do it well."**

**- Walker Evans**



## Lessons from Evans

The nice thing about reading first-hand interviews with some of the greatest masters of a medium, especially at a point in their lives when they look back, is that one gets simple answers to questions. One such interview of Walker Evans was conducted by Paul Cummings in 1971 for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. The whole interview has a lot to learn from. These are some small excerpts.

**Cummings:** You had, what, temporary jobs and things of that nature?

**Evans:** Yes. I had odd jobs. I guess soon after that I got hold of a camera and got passionately interested in that. *I do remember having jobs at night at two different places, once on Wall Street, and once at the New York Public Library so that I could have the days free. I photographed during the day.*

**Cummings:** How did the camera appear? Was that through a friend? Or what happened?

**Evans:** I really don't know very much about that. I just don't know. As a boy I had a cheap little camera and I had gone through the hobby photography experience developing film in the bathroom and so on. And I think it came from painters. Several of my friends were painters.

*And I had a visual education that I had just given myself.*

**Cummings:** Going back to the chronology here in the thirties, what kind of cameras and things were you interested in? Did you have a specific kind of equipment?

**Evans:** I've always been interested in cameras. I'm even interested... *well, I was interested a little bit too much even in the technique of photography. It's a fascinating thing. But it hasn't much to do with art and an artist had better stay away from it, not get absorbed in it. It's too absorbing.*

**Cummings:** Oh yes, there are endless darkroom tricks.

**Evans:** Oh yes, you can do all kinds of tricks. It's just better not to. *I am after mastery of what I want to do; that is, I want to be able to do what I want to do, and do it well.* And I insist on that even in teaching. I say, "You've got to know what you're doing and be on top of it and do it well. There's no excuse not to know the technique well." But I don't teach the technique. *I say you should go out and do it somehow or other; get it yourself.*

**K Madhavan Pillai**  
editor@betterphotography.in



**Alabama Tenant Farmer's Kitchen Near Moundville, 1936**

**by Walker Evans**

There is always the element of drama when it comes to American photographer, Walker Evans, a man stubbornly single-minded in pursuing his personal vision. "With the camera, it's all or nothing. You either get what you're after at once, or what you do has to be worthless," he had said.

"I don't think the essence of photography has the hand in it so much. The essence is done very quietly with a flash of the mind, and with a machine. I think too that photography is editing, editing after the taking. After knowing what to take, you have to do the editing."

**To read more about the life and times of Walker Evans**  
—Turn to page 110

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Kamlesh Mathakar, Vaibhav Ghavale: 9324490187

## Logistics

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## HEAD OFFICE

Network18 Media & Investments Ltd,  
"One Indiabulls Centre" Unit No. 501, 5th floor,  
Tower-I Jupiter Textile Mills, Senapati Bapat  
Marg, Elphinstone Road, Mumbai-400 016,  
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### For Your Pictures, Reader's Gallery and Reader's Tip:

- Visit <http://betterphotography.in/contests> and register yourself on the website
- Participate in the relevant contests on the page. There will always be a contest open for you to take part in!
- For Reader's Gallery contests, make sure the images have been made using a cellphone
- For Reader's Tip and Your Pictures contests, include a 100-word note on how and why you shot the image
- Winners of all the contests get featured on our website and can be featured in the magazine too. They will also receive special prizes!

### Send in a synopsis, with low-resolution images for viewing, to contribute articles to the following sections:

On Assignment, Step-by-Step, Photofeature, Tips & Tricks, Shooting Technique, History, Story Behind the Picture

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- To showcase your best photographs: [entries@betterphotography.in](mailto:entries@betterphotography.in)
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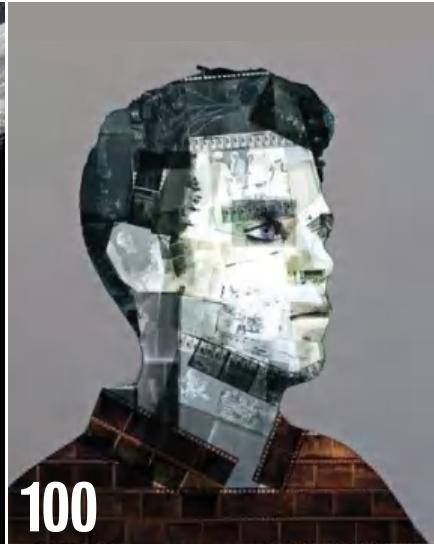
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# December 2015



58



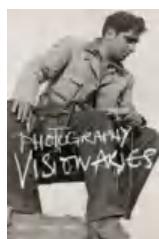
100

## SnapShots

26

### BookReview

'Photography Visionaries' by Mary Warner Marion



## ON THE COVER



PHOTOGRAPH: RAJ LALWANI  
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## GearGuide

30

### TEST Nikon 200-500mm f/5.6E ED VR

Sacrifices reach, but with far greater quality



32

### Tamron SP 45mm f/1.8 Di VC USD

Many firsts within a classic focal length



34

### Tokina AT-X 24-70mm f/2.8 PRO FX

A brand new standard zoom



36

### Yongnuo YN600EX-RT

Nearly identical to a proprietary flashgun but at a fraction of cost



40

### TEST HTC One M9

Does this flagship cellphone leave a mark?



44

### CELLPHONE DIARIES

Amit Mehra on how a series of singles got strung together in a photobook

48

### CELLPHONE PROFILE Bredun Edwards

On creating unforgettable journeys in B&W vignettes





104

## BetterPictures

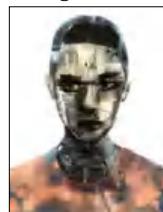
58

SHOOTING TECHNIQUE  
**Street Photography**  
10 emerging  
photographers on their  
favourite practices



100

ON ASSIGNMENT  
**Recycled Portraits**  
Nick Gentry on creating  
incredible portraiture  
using discarded materials



## ShowCase

104

PROFILE  
**S L Shanth Kumar**  
On the value of rigour  
and single-mindedness

110

GREAT MASTERS  
**Walker Evans**  
A look at the indomitable  
life and spirit of the  
enigmatic master of  
street photography

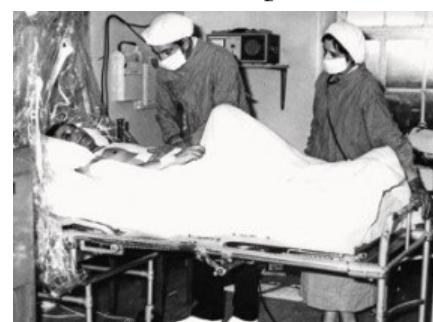


110

## PhotoFinish

154

STORY BEHIND THE PICTURE  
The very first image of a  
heart transplant



## Regulars

FEEDBACK.....	14
READER'S GALLERY .....	54
1000 WORDS .....	116
YOUR PICTURES.....	118

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# Feedback

**"What pushes us to do the things we really want to do?"**



Image source: Wikimedia Commons

## The Monkey Mayhem

I have been following the David Slater vs Monkey photograph copyright dispute for a while, and I must say, it is one of the most amusing pieces of news that has come out from the photographic world. Last I heard, PETA has filed a lawsuit on the photographer on behalf of the monkey, claiming that all proceeds and earnings from the image must go to the endangered animal, since it was the one who clicked the shutter.

I am sure both sides of the argument hold merit, but as a photographer, I can't help but offer my solidarity to David Slater. Even though it was the monkey who eventually shot the picture, who was the person who set the camera up for it to do the same? If David wasn't present in that jungle at that point, the iconic picture would not even exist. I wonder if the monkey realises what kind of trouble it has caused just because of its selfie!

**Avez Khan, Indore**

## Why I Shoot

Just the other day, I was thinking about the fact that what truly pushes us to do the things we want to do? I have a 9 to 5 job, and my weekends are dedicated to spending quality time with my five-year-old daughter. However, I am also an ardent fan of photography, but when there are so many responsibilities that I have to think of, photography usually takes a back seat.

Send your suggestions, thoughts, and feedback letters to...  
[feedback@betterphotography.in](mailto:feedback@betterphotography.in)  
Every month, the 'Letter of the Month' will win a special gift from



I subscribed to *Better Photography* six months back, and ever since then, I await eagerly for my month's copy to reach me. I read the magazine from cover to cover, and as many of your readers have said before me, it is a true inspiration. I enjoy reading the interviews, as they introduce me to so many new photographers. It is solely responsible for giving me that creative push, for urging me to pick up the camera and shoot. So now, I dedicate my weekends to photography. The best part? My five-year-old has been following in my footsteps, wanting to make pictures as well!

**Anurag Kumar, Varanasi**

## Stories from the Dark

The November 2015 issue of *Better Photography* is hands-down my favourite edition of the magazine this year. It was full of really good content, and I was mostly really excited to see the photographs of Léonard Pongo, one of my favourite photographers, in it. His raw images from the life and times of the Democratic Republic of Congo truly inspired me to look at my own city and country in a new light. What I love about his work is that there is no pretense, no whitewash... he has simply represented the people of his country as they truly are in the moment. One can only aspire to hone such a terrific vision of their own.

**• The November 2015 edition of the magazine featured The After Dark Stories, which showcased the work of several incredible photographers like Léonard Pongo.**

The After Dark Stories feature was simply superb, in that aspect, as I got to find out about a lot more photographers who are telling visual stories in such a unique manner. Kannagi Khanna's series on Kiran Patel was brilliant too.

**Seema Malhotra, New Delhi**



**Glimpses of the Uncanny**

Léonard Pongo photographs life in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in an often large, deep, personal commitment to his previously unexplored roots.

**H**is photographs of the Congo are a reminder that the world is still a place of wonder and beauty. The images are raw, unfiltered, and honest, capturing the daily life of the people in their natural environment. The images are a reminder that the world is still a place of wonder and beauty. The images are raw, unfiltered, and honest, capturing the daily life of the people in their natural environment.

## The Power of One

If you ask me to think of the greatest photographs in the world, a definite few pop up in my head. Steve McCurry's *Afghan Girl* and Alfred Eisenstaedt's *V-J Day* are just some that I could immediately think of. These are the works of some of the world's most legendary photographers, and in contrast, how many single iconic photographs are we seeing these days?

I say this with regards to the works I saw in several photo festivals that happened recently in India. Bodies of works have taken precedence over single images. This has also permeated into many coveted grants and awards, where once again, single images are not given as much importance as a photo series.

No one can discount the impact of a photo series, but with such little weightage given to single images, I wonder what this says about this form of storytelling. In my opinion, a single great image has the potential to tell a story 1000 times more powerful.

Moreover, creating single images should actually be more challenging for photographers, purely because it necessitates an extremely discerning shortlist by them. I strongly feel we should encourage that more. In fact, we should take it as a challenge upon ourselves to shoot as little as possible and yet make the best possible image of the moment.

**Kapil Daswani, Kolkata**



We believe that the joy of a family photo is in displaying it. To make your special memories stand out, this Letter of the Month wins a special Photo Frame from Red Moments!



## "Do or do not. There is no try." Inspiration Lies Anywhere

Sometimes the most random thing can set off a bulb inside of you, or an inspiration that was sitting dormant inside of you.

For me, it was a dialogue from *Star Wars Episode V: The Empire Strikes Back*. A young Luke Skywalker is undertaking Jedi training from Master Yoda, when the following dialogue exchange takes place:

Yoda: No! No different! Only different in your mind. You must unlearn what you have learned.

Luke: All right, I'll give it a try.

Yoda: No! Try not. Do... or do not. There is no try.

And that was it. That one simple dialogue made me realise how much I was holding myself back from understanding what I am truly capable of. So now, instead of wondering if I will actually be able to make a good picture, I just go ahead and shoot, without overthinking it. And I am mostly quite satisfied with my results. In a way, Master Yoda became my teacher too!

**Aarav Kapoor, Pune**

## Remembering Two Icons

The October 2015 issue of *Better Photography* is definitely a collector's item! The various

features and photographs from across the world, especially on wildlife and underwater photography were a delight.

However, reading the profound Quote of the Month in the SnapShots page brought me sorrow and nostalgia. I never knew that Bill Jay, the iconic lecturer and Editor had passed away! He was so full of life, passionate about whatever he did, and his magazines, *Camera Owner* and later *Creative Camera* were great sources of learning.

He was an inspiration to me and was a very accommodating person. In fact, he had readily accepted my invitation to come and give a lecture at the Camera Club of Great Britain.

Bill was kind enough to feature my work in *Camera Owner*, and also generous with a few covers!

Furthermore, reading about Jitendra Arya, in the past tense, in the NCPA Photo Festival feature brought a lump in my throat. He was the main 'instigator' to get me back to India. He and his wife, Chhaya, were instrumental in my first professional shoot in India, which was a fashion feature in *Femina*.

May their souls rest in peace.  
**Swapan Mukherjee, Mumbai**

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# SnapShots

## WHAT'S NEW

### Lytro Immmerge

The Lytro Immmerge can generate virtual views from any point, within a certain volume around the rig. The VR rig enables 'photorealistic live-action immersive storytelling' via its Six Degree of Freedom (6DoF), and also allows blending of CG footage into the mix. One can also produce 360°, 180° and spherical footage with the device.



### Leica SL

The Leica SL uses a 24MP CMOS sensor that has a maximum ISO of 50,000, and offers a built-in SXAG 4.4MP resolution EVF and also features a joystick for quick AF point selection. The camera also enables 4K video capture at 24 fps and features a contrast-based AF system with 49-points, which Leica claims is the fastest in the market. Leica also announced three lenses—the Vario-Elmarit-SL 24–90mm f/2.8–4 ASPH, the Apo-Vario Elmarit-SL 90–280mm f/2.8–4 and the Summilux-SL 50mm f/1.4 ASPH.

### Lensbaby Composer Pro II with Edge 50 Optic

The 50mm f/3.2 lens lets the user control the depth of field in-camera. The metal lens body tilts easily and fluidly to create images with a sharp slice of focus surrounded by gradually increasing blur. Its 9-blade internal aperture stops down to f/22, and the lens focuses as close as 8-inches from its subject.



### Fujifilm XF 35mm f/2 R WR Lens and XF 1.4x WR Teleconverter

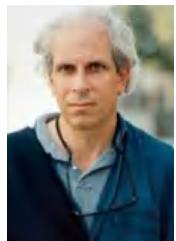
The 35mm f/2 lens meant for Fuji's X-mount features an almost silent AF system, a 9-blade circular aperture and is moisture and dust-resistant. Fuji also announced the 1.4x WR Teleconverter which is compatible only with the XF 50–140mm f/2.8 R LM OIS WR lens, whereby it multiplies the focal length by 1.4x.



“ To see something spectacular and recognise it as a photographic possibility is not making a very big leap. But to see something ordinary, something you'd see every day, and recognise it as a photographic possibility—that is what I am interested in.

STEPHEN SHORE (1947)

Stephen Shore is famous for transforming elements of mundane environments into subjects of thought-provoking meditation. The images may seem banal but subtly imply a deep-seeded meaning. Shore is self-taught and a pioneer in colour photography and the 8 x 10 format. He has been the Director of Bard College of Photography since 1982. Books of his work include *Uncommon Places: The Complete Works, Essex County*, and several others.



Photograph/Guido Guidi

## Tashi Tobgyal, Shahbaz Khan Win Press Council Award

The Press Council of India (PCI) recently announced the winners of its national awards for excellence in journalism, for the year 2015.

Tashi Tobgyal, a photojournalist with *The Indian Express*, bagged the award in the *Photofeature* category, notably for his 12-day photo coverage of the 2014 Kashmir floods. "It was my first time in Kashmir and I did not expect it to be so bad. I was constantly worried about how I am going to move around? We were literally wading through water and trying to find dry patches to shoot. It was frightening to see a huge city drown in water," he mentioned.

Tashi was also congratulated by Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay, the democratically



elected political leader of the Tibetan people, for his win. Overwhelmed by the honour he said, "It is a great feeling to be acknowledged nationwide. Not a lot of attention is paid to journalists who are not in the top notch categories. However, receiving the award after 10 years of being in the field, makes me feel pampered!"

Another photographer who was awarded for his work was Shahbaz Khan from the Press Trust of India. He received the award in the *Single News Picture* category. Both Tashi and Shahbaz received their award from President Pranab Mukherjee, on 16 November, on the occasion of National Press Day.



All photographs by Tashi Tobgyal

## Prashant Panjicar Joins 2016 World Press Photo Jury

The World Press Photo Foundation announced its panel for its 2016 contest. Francis Kohn, Photo Director of Agence France-Presse, will head the jury consisting of 17 other professionals from the industry. The announcement was made on 12 November.

Amongst the members of the panel is Prashant Panjicar, distinguished

photographer and Co-founder and Director of Delhi Photo Festival, who will be one of the panelists judging the entries in the *Documentary* category.

In the past, Panjicar has served on the jury of the World Press Photo Awards in 2002, the China International Press Photo Competition in 2005 and the Indian Express Press Photo Awards.

## WHAT'S NEW

**Manfrotto BeFree One Tripod**

The lightweight tripod features 4-section legs, which are collapsible to 32 cm from a maximum height of 130 cm. It weighs 1.3 kg and can support weights of up to 2.5 kg. It also features a two-section center column, clasp leg locks and a quick release plate.

**HTC One A9**

The 5-inch phone features a 13MP f/2.0 camera with LED flash, Octa-Core Snapdragon processor, 2GB RAM with 16GB internal storage (expandable memory) and also enables 1080p video recording. Other features include phase-detection autofocus, optical image stabilisation and also enables the user to shoot in RAW.



## Nikon Declares Winner of Small World Contest

For the past 41 years, Nikon has been encouraging photographers to submit their photographs captured using the light microscope. This year, it announced the winners of its 2015 Small World Photomicrography Competition.

Ralph Claus Grimm from Australia, won the first prize for his stunning image titled *Eye of a honey bee (Apis mellifera) covered in dandelion pollen (120x)*. The incredibly detailed photograph is testament to how little we know of one of the most common insects in the world.

Aside from Grimm, Nikon also recognised over 77 other photographers. As his prize, Grimm will get to choose Nikon gear worth USD 3000 (approx. Rs. 198,327). His photograph was chosen from over 2000 entries, submitted from 83 countries across the globe. To view the other stunning entries from the contest, visit [www.nikonsmallworld.com](http://www.nikonsmallworld.com)



Ralph Claus Grimm

## Mukhtar Khan Wins Notable Photojournalism Award



category winners was Kashmir-based photojournalist Mukhtar Khan, who won second place in the *Feature* category. He won for his photograph of a little boy on a swing, in the midst of what seems like a forest.

Khan, a photographer with the Associated Press, has been shooting for the agency since 2001. In the 20 years that he has been photographing, Khan has been published in *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, *The Kashmir Monitor*, *Kashmir Observer* and others. He will receive the award in a ceremony which will be held in the United States soon.

### CREATIVE IMAGE



James Nachtwey and Kanu Gandhi.  
*Creative Image* is priced at Rs. 250.

## Umrao Singh Sher-Gil Grant for Photography

The Sher-Gil Sundaram Arts Foundation announced the Umrao Singh Sher-Gil Grant for Photography worth Rs. 5 lakhs. The annual grant is meant for Indian photographers who have started a project, and are in need of funds to complete it.

"The grant will recognise a photographer's exemplary commitment of the staged or constructed image.

Documentary photography projects using the idiom of the staged or constructed image will also be considered," stated the grant. The applications will be judged by Urs Stahel, Jeroo Mulla and Devika Daulet-Singh. For those interested to apply, the application form can be downloaded from [www.ssaf.in](http://www.ssaf.in). The deadline for the grant is 30 November.

## EVENTS

13 November–3 December

### (in) Verto

Alliance Française Bengaluru

As part of Alliance Française's Young Talent Program, Graphic Designer and Printmaker Siddharth Sadashiv is showcasing his work. The exhibit was curated by Franck Barthélémy, Balan Nambiar and Ravi Cavale.

3–16 December

### The Deepak Puri Collection: Legacy of Photojournalism

The Harrington Street Arts Centre, Kolkata



Enabled by renowned Photo Editor Deepak Puri's generous donation to the Museum of Art and Photography in Bengaluru, the exhibition features a selection of works from over 50 photographers, including masters like Raghu Rai and Steve McCurry.

5–6 December

### Basic Photography Workshop

Bengaluru

The two-day workshop conducted by Kalyan Varma, is designed for those who are interested to gain more insight into exposure, composition and cameras and lenses. Participants will also receive critique on their work. The cost of the workshop is Rs. 6900. For more information, email workshop@ kalyanvarma.net

6–20 December

### Maharanis: Women of Royal India

Sanskriti Museums, New Delhi



Tasveer Art Gallery will be organising an exhibition titled *Maharanis: Women of Royal India*. It will include images from the archives of the Museum of Art and Photography, royal collections from across the subcontinent and other institutional and private collections from both in India and abroad.

## PRO TALK

**Butterfly Lighting** is a form of lighting in which the main source of light is placed high and directly in front of the subject.

## CSE Reveals the Winners of its Climate Change Initiative

The Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), in partnership with Tamron India and Heinrich Boll Stiftung, have announced the winners of the Backs to the Wall—Climate Change and Vulnerable Communities contest. The winners, Showkat Nanda, Sudipto Das, Prabir Kumar Talukdar, Eklavya Prasad and Sourav Karmakar, will each receive a Tamron lens.

Also, as part of the initiative, CSE gave away seven grants worth Rs. 50,000 to Arun Sharma, Gaganpreet Singh, Javed Dar, Monica Tiwari, Pattabi Raman, Sandeep Rastogi and Subrata Biswas. It organised an exhibition, where the images from the winners and the fellows were exhibited from 5–6 November, at the India Habitat Centre in New Delhi.

## Sony Brings in Firmware Update to the Alpha 7 II

Sony's new firmware update for the Alpha 7 II brings in 14-bit RAW, thus allowing the camera to join the likes of the a7S II, a7R II, and RX1R II.

Additionally, the firmware update will also feature phase detection autofocus, when shooting with lenses via an adapter, thus allowing



the camera to focus faster and precisely. Previously, the a7 II was limited to contact detection AF when shooting with adapted lenses (e.g. a Sony A-mount lens on an A-to-E-mount adapter). Owners of the a7 II will be able to download the firmware starting from 18 November, through the company's website.

## CALL FOR ENTRIES



Participate in the Wisden–MCC Photograph of the Year, and you could win over Rs. 2 lakhs!

### Wisden–MCC Cricket Photograph of the Year

**The Competition:** The contest, in association with J P Morgan, is open to professional and amateur photographers from across the globe.

**Prizes:** The main winner and two runners-up will receive 2000 pounds (approx. Rs. 2,02,300) and 1000 pounds (approx. Rs. 1,01,17), respectively.

**Website:** [www.lords.org/mcc/the-club/photo-of-the-year/enter-the-2015-photo-of-the-year-competition/](http://www.lords.org/mcc/the-club/photo-of-the-year/enter-the-2015-photo-of-the-year-competition/)  
**Deadline:** 3 January 2016

### Grand Prix Fotofestiwal 2016

**The Competition:** The competition, with its open theme, is allowing submissions from all over the world.

**Prizes:** The grand prize winner will receive 10,000 Polish Zloty (approx. Rs. 1,66,740).

**Website:** [www.fotofestiwal.com/2015/en/news/grand-prix-fotofestiwal-2016-open-call/](http://www.fotofestiwal.com/2015/en/news/grand-prix-fotofestiwal-2016-open-call/)  
**Deadline:** 10 December

### India Habitat Centre for Photography

**The Competition:** Participants of the contest are required to submit their work in the form of photographs, videos, photo installations, animations or a large photobook.

**Theme:** The project should focus on themes—water, earth, air, fire and ether.

**Prizes:** A grant of Rs. 2 lakhs will be awarded to four photographers each, and they will be given six months to produce a body of work on the theme of *Sustainable Development*.

**Entry Fee:** Rs. 500-Rs. 1000

**Website:** [www.indiahabitat.org/download/mission\\_statement.pdf](http://www.indiahabitat.org/download/mission_statement.pdf)

**Deadline:** 5 February 2016

### Nikon Small World Photomicrography Competition

**The Competition:** With the intention to "showcase the beauty and complexity of life as seen through the light microscope" the contest is open to anyone interested in microscopy and photography.

**Prizes:** The first, second and third prize winner will each receive USD 3000 (approx. Rs. 1,98,610), USD 2000 (approx. Rs. 132,408) and USD 1000 (approx. Rs. 66,200) respectively, towards selecting the Nikon gear of their choice.

**Website:** [www.nikonsmallworld.com](http://www.nikonsmallworld.com)

**Deadline:** 30 April

17 December  
**Willy Ronis,**  
**Autoportrait d'un Photographe**  
Alliance Française Mumbai



Set against the backdrop of his self-portraits taken each year from the age of 16, the film presents a captivating interview with Willy Ronis. The photographer tells the stories behind his now famous photos, right from the historical shot to the private moment.

19 December  
**Photography Workshop**

Imperial Trade Centre, Cochin  
Canon will be conducting an Art of Portrait Photography and Lighting workshop by Canon photo mentor Abin Alex. The cost of the workshop is Rs. 1000. To register visit [www.edge.canon.co.in/eosAcademy.aspx](http://www.edge.canon.co.in/eosAcademy.aspx)

24

28 December–2 January 2016  
**Big Cat Week**  
Masai Mara, Kenya



Toehold will be conducting a photo tour to Masai Mara with wildlife photographer and writer Jayanth Sharma. For more details on the tour and to register visit [www.toehold.in/phototours/2015/masai-mara-christmas-new-year-special-tour.php](http://www.toehold.in/phototours/2015/masai-mara-christmas-new-year-special-tour.php)

8–13 January 2016  
**Aveek Sen—The Eye in Thought**

Kolkata  
The workshop conducted by Aveek Sen, Senior Assistant Editor at *The Telegraph*—Calcutta, will deal with exploring photography through the realms of literature, cinema, music and everyday experience. The cost of the workshop is Rs. 20,000. For more details about the workshop visit [www.lighthousecalcutta.com/aveek-sen-the-eye-in-thought](http://lighthousecalcutta.com/aveek-sen-the-eye-in-thought)

### PRO TALK

**Surrealism was originally an early 1920's artistic movement. The word is often used to indicate images that take reality to a new level.**

## EyeEm Unveils Winner of *Untold Stories* Contest

Around September, EyeEm had announced its partnership with the renowned VII Photo agency, to launch *Untold Stories*. This was to be a three-week project with the aim to discover the best "thought-provoking and visually compelling untold stories from the EyeEm community and beyond."

Last month, on 11 November, they announced the results of this venture. 15-year-old Rafael Graf was



Showkat Nanda

declared the winner, and will receive a one-on-one portfolio review with a VII photographer. There were two runners-up as well—Tako Robakidze and Jay van Hanten. Also, photographer Showkat Nanda was selected as one of the honourable mentions, amongst the 26 that were chosen.

The judging panel comprised of Maciek Nabrdalik, Donald Weber and Sarker Protick.

## Instagram Launches Boomerang, its New Standalone App

Instagram recently launched a new video app called Boomerang, which lets you turn everyday moments into something fun and unexpected. After shooting a one-second burst of five photos, the app turns it into a silent video that plays forwards and then reverses over and over in a loop.

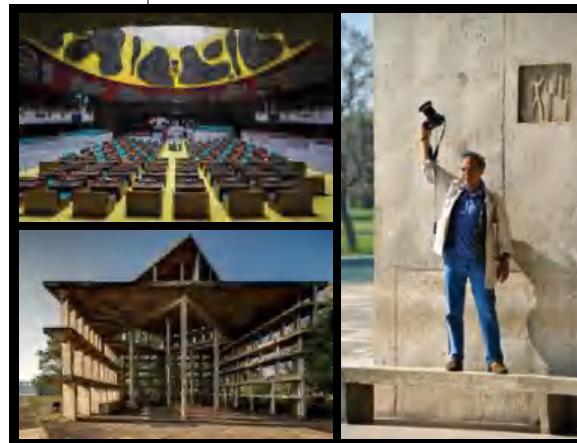
Boomerangs are automatically saved to your camera roll and don't require you to have an Instagram account to make use of it. It also allows you to save the sequence as a 4-second video that loops the shots back and forth several times, so you can watch and share it outside of Boomerang.

### THE MONTH THAT WAS

#### In the Footsteps of Le Corbusier: Antonio Martinelli Photographs

On the occasion of the 50th death anniversary of renowned architect Le Corbusier, Art Heritage held an exhibition on Antonio Martinelli's photographs of Corbusier's commissioned work in Chandigarh and Ahmedabad. The exhibit was inaugurated by H E Linus von Castelmur, the Ambassador of Switzerland to India and Bhutan, and was also graced by the presence of eminent architect Shri Balkrishna Doshi. The event took place at the Shridharani Gallery in New Delhi from 29 October–16 November.

• Antonio Martinelli's photographs were displayed at the Art Heritage exhibit, commemorating Le Corbusier's 50th death anniversary.



#### Shadows of an Empire

On 11 November, Jehangir Art Gallery held a fine art photography exposition by Sanjayshankar. He showcased a collection of images belonging to the ruins of the Vijayanagar Empire. The exhibition was inaugurated by veteran Rear Admiral (Retd) Arun Auditto AVSM. The exhibit was open to visitors till 17 November.

#### Off Roaders

The exhibit was held from 19–22 November at the India Habitat Centre in New Delhi. Shot by different photographers in the form of a travel diary, "Each picture spoke of a new possibility in an old scenario, as the artist's eye took uncommon routes to familiar destinations."

#### Shillong International Photo Festival

Inaugurated on 16 November, this year, the theme of the festival was *Light*. The event was attended by a plethora of photographers like Raghu Rai, Prashant Panjari, Rathika Ramasamy, and Sumit Dayal. The six-day event enjoyed a wide variety of talks, portfolio reviews and workshops on the themes of visual storytelling and photojournalism.

#### Get the Basics Right Workshop

On 21 November, a workshop covering the basics of photography was held at the Konsult Art & Design Academy in Bengaluru. It covered topics like camera controls, composition, lighting and others.

Antonio Martinelli

## INDUSTRY VOICE

**"For us, the mantra is clear—Empowering luxury for everyone."**



**Peter Chang**  
Regional Head-South Asia & Country Manager, ASUS India

At ASUS, we believe that innovation is a balance between beauty and strength. For us, the mantra is clear-cut—Empowering luxury for everyone. Therefore, our products intend to combine features and design sensibilities of high-end smartphones at an economic price.

When it comes to empowering cellphone photographers, the story isn't all that different. ASUS smartphones feature some of the best in-house developed technology that enhances the whole mobile photography experience. Some of these innovations include the likes of the ASUS Tru Vivid Technology, the ASUS Splendid with Anti-Bluray Mode and the Pixel Master Camera technology.

Also, the image quality in cameraphones continues to grow in leaps and bounds. This has created new opportunities for products tailored to mobile photographers. With our latest portfolio of Zenfones (Zenfone 2 Laser, Zenfone Selfies) or even with the latest ZenPad, we aspire to a world of creative images that equips photographers with a comfortable platform, and strengthens the whole photography experience.

Today, smartphone cameras boast of features that stand to compete with the point-and-shoot models. These cameras have unleashed a talent that has been lying dormant for years, allowing for spontaneity like never before. Therefore, it is definitely empowering more people to ditch the technicalities of imagery and express their creativity through smartphone imagery.

— As told to Conchita Fernandes

## National Geographic Lays Off 9% of its Staff

Months after *National Geographic* announced its merger with Rupert Murdoch's 21st Century Fox, employees of the magazine were informed that 9% of the staff would be laid off.

Official emails were sent out to all the 2000 member staff on 3 November, which would decide their fate in the magazine. Of the approximate 180 people that were laid off was veteran photographer Michael "Nick" Nichols, who has spent nearly 20 years traveling across the globe, bringing stunning visuals of remote places to the readers of the magazine. Nichols joined *National Geographic* in 1996 and became the Editor-at-large in 2008.

In an interview with *The Guardian*, the 63-year-old photographer spoke about how he wasn't surprised when he received the email. "I was getting ready to retire



Image Source: [www.michaelnicknichols.com](http://www.michaelnicknichols.com)

in January. So for me this is kind of a gift. But it's a sad day for my friends who were not as ready," he said.

He also went on to talk about whether the magazine will now be able to continue funding long-term projects dealing with the environment. "You can't do that with a for-profit company. You have to have philanthropy subsidise long-term assignments," he said.

## Reuters Will No Longer Accept RAW Submissions

Reuters has confirmed a change in the photo submission policy for its freelance photographers. It has requested that contributing photographers submit only out-of-camera JPEGs rather than JPEGs created from RAW files. The files are allowed to be subjected to minimal editing, like level correction and cropping, as long as the integrity of the image is maintained. All of this may have been the result of recent

concerns over heavily processed images featured in photography contests.

This year, about 20% of submissions to the World Press Photo contest were rejected because of gross image manipulation. The agency has also emphasised on the vitality of speed. "Speed is very important to us. We have asked our photographers to skip labour and time consuming processes to get their pictures to our clients faster."

## BOOK REVIEW

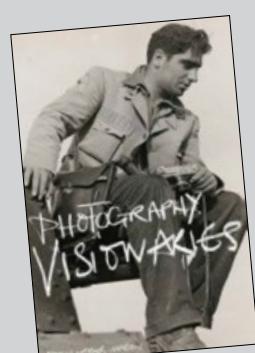
**Title:** Photography Visionaries  
**Authors:** Mary Warner Marien  
**ISBN:** 978-178067-475-9  
**Publisher:** Laurence King Publishing Ltd  
**Price:** 25 pounds (approx. Rs. 2524)

## An Anthology of Dedicated Experimenters

"The twists and turns of photographers' lives and their images, indeed, the very range of their work, speak to the notion of a visionary as a 'Visioneer,'" acknowledges Mary Warner Marien in the introduction of her book *Photography Visionaries*.

Marien, an American academic, skillfully compiled the works of 75 images-makers of which "some created images that became cultural icons; others experimented with style, expanding the medium's capacity." The plethora of artists accommodates photography masters from all the genres varying from documentary and photojournalism to portraiture and fine-art work. Thus, Edward Weston's minimalism and Alfred Stieglitz's pictorial art work are very well celebrated with Weegee's raw reportage and Sebastião Salgado's political work. The colour in Stephen Shore's modern topography, Raghubir Singh's photographs of India and Nan Goldin's honest portraits adds an emotional complexity to this book.

By walking through the history of the medium, images and a timeline charting salient moments of their career, the reader gets an interesting insight into the lives of all the photographers. The book, while successfully offering some engaging perspective, does come across as a bit debatable because of Marien's selection. Nevertheless, *Photography Visionaries* is a captivating read for enthusiasts and curious minds who want to get inspired and know more about the medium, and the people who shaped the world of photography.



—Written by Sakshi Parikh

## Elinchrom Launches the EL-Skyport Transmitter Plus

Elinchrom recently announced the EL-Skyport Transmitter Plus HS, which gives the ability to control and visualise power settings across all their lights, directly from the Skyport transmitter, and also enables shooting at speeds of up to 1/8000s in the Hi-Sync mode.

The Large LCD display of the Skyport HS features two-way control via a new Visual Feedback Interface, which lets you see the exact power of every light



in your setup right on the transmitter. Users can get two way communication and control each light's power level and modeling lamp setting directly from the Skyport transmitter.

Other specs include a new Over Drive Sync system that allows the optimisation of exposure at high shutterspeeds, has 2x AA battery power, an integrated AF Illuminator, a mini-USB socket, and a range of 656 feet outdoors and 196 feet indoors.

## Snapseed for Android Can Read and Edit RAW images

Google pushed out a new version of Snapseed where the latest update brings RAW editing of DNG photos (or other RAW photos that have been converted to DNG).

When you pull up a RAW file in Snapseed, it immediately loads the Develop tool with options for exposure, highlights, temperature, and more. From there, you can access any tool you want and save the result as a JPEG.

## Ricoh Unveils a New Lens for the Pentax 645D/645Z

Ricoh has announced a new wide-angle prime for the Pentax 645D/645Z camera—the HD PENTAX-D FA645 35mm f/3.5 AL [IF] lens.

When mounted on the 645 body, the lens behaves like a 27.5mm (in 35mm terms) and has a minimum focus distance of 0.3m, and gives a maximum magnification ratio of 0.25x.

Design-wise, the lens is composed of a 9-blade rounded aperture, thus allowing for the creation of the beautiful bokeh effect. The lens retails for 1549 pounds (approx. Rs. 1,02,400) and will ship out in December.



## ISIS Steals and Revamps Photographer's Image

Imagine if your art was stolen and used in propaganda ephemera by a terrorist organisation? California-based photographer Brian McCarty made the horrible discovery that ISIS had stolen one of his photographs.

Known for integrating toy characters into real-life situations in his ongoing project titled WAR-TOYS, McCarty has combined his vocation with his avocation of drawing attention to the plight of young children in war-torn areas. The original photo depicted a Cinderella figurine with



Brian McCarty

missiles falling over her head in a war zone. However, in the doctored image, ISIS has swapped the figurine for its black flag.

## Kodak and Piquor Unveil Selfie Photobooth

Kodak Alaris and Piquor Technologies have joined hands to market and advertise the Selfie Photobooth. This is a creative and fun 'social photobooth' for visitors to pose, capture and share photos. They also provide a novel solution for social

events that enable consumers to capture, share and print fun moments at weddings and parties. The services are currently available across eight cities—Mumbai, Bengaluru, Delhi, Chennai, Kolkata, Ahmedabad, Raipur and Ludhiana.

# Better Photography

Our ever curious and passionate love affair with the camera will never cease. And so be it as Better Photography, India's first magazine completely devoted to the art and science of photography presents an expansive imagery like no other can. It is also the best-selling photography magazine in India and South Asia.

[www.betterphotography.in](http://www.betterphotography.in)

# GearGuide

## HOW WE TEST

### Product Categorisation

We first segregate products into categories for the purpose of equitability in testing. The DSLR is divided into entry-level, semi-professional and professional categories. For compacts, we distinguish between advanced and basic compact cameras. Similarly, we also test consumer and pro lenses, flashguns, printers, and other photographic accessories and gear.

### The Process

We primarily test for features, performance, build, ergonomics, warranty and support. While this remains constant, the weightage we give to these parameter differs from category to category, because different types of consumers have diverse expectations from products.

### Final Ratings

Under each main parameter, we list out hundreds of individual variables (for eg. colour accuracy for individual colours in different lighting, individual features, dynamic range, center-to-edge definition, light falloff, etc) against which we either give points or simply mark 'yes' or 'no'. Thus, we arrive at a score for that parameter, and then, the final score, denoted as a percentage. Additionally, based on the current pricing of a product, a star rating for 'Value for Money' is considered. Value for Money does not affect the final percentage, because prices for products change constantly.

### Our Seals of Approval

Any product that scores 80% or higher in individual tests gets 'BP Recommended'—a seal of approval from our team. In comparison tests, we also tag products as 'BP Best Performer' and 'BP Best Value for Money'.

### BP Excellence Awards

At the end of the calendar year, the highest rated products in each category automatically win the Better Photography Excellence Award. This is Better Photography's recognition of the very best products launched in the course of the year, and the companies that made them.



### Nikon AF-S 200–500mm f/5.6E ED VR

## Far-reaching Quality

The Nikon 200–500mm f/5.6E ED VR combines quality and affordability for the serious wildlife photographer. Shridhar Kunte puts it to the test.

**T**he Nikkor 200–500mm f/5.6E ED VR is a response to Tamron and Sigma's popular 150–600mm lenses. Nikon has priced it strategically, a touch above Tamron's and Sigma's Contemporary series lens, but lower than Sigma's Sports series. While Sigma and Tamron both offer a wider zoom range, the Nikkor has a constant aperture of f/5.6, as opposed to its two main competitors, that are only f/6.3 at the telephoto end. This makes the Nikkor a little heavier, but also more practical, while shooting in fading light.

### Features

Thanks to an internal focusing system, the overall length of the lens remains the same while focusing, and the 95mm filter thread does not rotate. This makes the lens ideal for use with polarising and graduated filters, if you can afford them in that size, of course. The lens features a 9-bladed aperture diaphragm for beautiful, evenly blurred backgrounds. The minimum focusing distance is 2.2m, which is quite good, considering the focal length. The lens is neither designed nor suitable for macro work as it offers a magnification ratio of 0.22x (1:4.5).

But in practice, you can shoot really small subjects like dragonflies.

### Handling

We wouldn't recommend using this lens handheld. In fact, when I tried handholding the combination of the D4S and lens, my left arm tennis elbow injury, which had subsided earlier this year, started troubling me again. Also, when the lens is zoomed in, its length increases, which moves some of the weight further out in front, way from the centre of gravity, thus making it unstable.

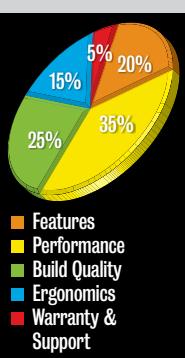
The lens is equipped with a removable tripod mount collar which is not so adequate in size, considering the bulk of the lens.

A larger collar would have provided a fuller, more balanced area to place your hand

### SPECIFICATIONS

Model name	Nikon AF-S 200–500mm f/5.6E ED VR
MRP	Rs. 94,950
Lens construction	19 elements in 12 groups
Closest focusing distance	2.2m
Max. Magnification	1:4.5
Diaphragm blades	9
Max. Aperture	f/5.6
Dimensions, Weight	108 x 267.5mm, 2300g

### WEIGHTAGE OF PARAMETERS



## TEST

**Tamron 45mm f/1.8**

Quite a bokeh specialist, this

32



## TEST

**Tokina 24-70mm f/2.8**

Incredibly sharp, and at a good price

34



## TEST

**Yongnou YN600EX-RT**

Nearly identical to the Canon flagship flash

36



The fast focusing speed helped in capturing the approaching bird in flight. The lens exhibits good overall sharpness even when shot at wide open.

Exposure: 1/2500sec at f/5.6 (ISO 800)

Suresh Narayanan

while shooting. In addition to this, a longer collar with contoured finger grips on the underside of the tripod mount, would have also helped when carrying the lens around. The base of the collar is not compatible with Arca-type locking. I would advise you to attach an extra lens plate, but again, there is only one hole to mount the plate and no provision to engage the locking pin.

The locking pin would have avoided the twisting of plate on field, while using the lens on any kind of support. To zoom in or out, the zoom ring needs to be rotated to 180°, which makes the lens operation a bit slow to capture fast action.

### Performance

The focusing speed is a lot faster than its close competitors from Sigma and Tamron, especially in low light, where it excels. Even while shooting birds in flight and tiny dragonflies, AF acquisition time and speed were very good.

The lens exhibits excellent sharpness throughout its focal length. The lens is sharp wide open at every focal length, and optimum sharpness is achieved at f/8 and

f/11. While shooting against the light, a slight hint of flare is noticed at the wide end of the lens. Despite the absence of Nano Crystal Coating, chromatic aberration is nearly absent. The light falloff behaviour is similar to most other telephotos—uniform illumination is achieved by f/8 at wide end and f/11 at telephoto end. Though handheld shooting isn't ideal with this lens, the VR, in practice, gave me a three-stop advantage, letting me shoot at 500mm, at 1/60sec.

### Conclusion

This is not a perfect lens... its ergonomics, especially, could have been a lot better. But getting a super telephoto under a lakh is often about compromises. When compared to the Sigma Contemporary and Tamron lens, the Nikkor may have a slight focal length disadvantage, but excels in every other aspect. The price of Rs. 94,950 is slightly more than its close competitors, but the vast gains in quality, along with the constant f/5.6 aperture, make the difference in price worth it. If you are conscious about quality and wish to photograph sports and wildlife, you should not look elsewhere. **EP**

## FINAL RATINGS

<b>Features</b> IS mode for sports, weathersealed, f/5.6	18/20
<b>Performance</b> Sharpness, Good IS performance	33/35
<b>Build Quality</b> High quality metal and plastic construction combined	23/25
<b>Ergonomics</b> Large zoom ring rotation angle, small tripod collar	12/15
<b>Warranty &amp; Support</b> Large number of service facilities	4/5

**OVERALL 90%**

**Who should buy it?** Wildlife and action photographers who don't mind sacrificing reach, for better quality.

**Why?** Class-leading performance at every focal length.

**Value for Money**



**Tamron SP 45mm f/1.8 Di VC USD**

# A Worthy Contender

The Tamron SP 45mm f/1.8 Di VC USD is the company's much vaunted entry into the hallowed grounds of the normal prime. K Madhavan Pillai puts it to the test.

**T**amron has been targeting high-end users with its recent launches. Late last year saw the well-received SP 15–30mm. The very latest introductions are part of the 'new' Super Performance series, the SP 35mm (tested in our previous issue) and the SP 45mm f/1.8 Di VC USD. The 45mm, came as a surprise, primarily because they are wooing users of the nifty fifty—a focal length already filled with options across price brackets. And yet, there is no denying that Tamron has found a sweet spot right in the middle, in terms of features ignored by other manufacturers, and pricing.

## Features

To begin with, 45mm is closer to the angle of view of the human eye than the 50mm. This may not sound like much, but the slightly wider angle inherently makes the lens feel more natural and inclusive while shooting. Unique among the competition, this lens is weathersealed, including a rubber gasket at the mount. This is also very first normal block lens in the world to feature image stabilisation. The lens is available in Canon, Nikon and Sony mounts. Since Sony's full-frame A-mount SLTs and the E-mount Mk II series of cameras have sensor-shift IS, the Sony version of the 45mm does not feature VC.

An excellent minimum focus distance of 11.4 inches (from the lens mount) allows a maximum magnification ratio

of 1:3.4 (0.29x). Full-time MF override is possible by simply rotating the focus ring. Tamron has enabled a rotation of almost 180° on the lens barrel to move across the focus range (as opposed to about 35 degrees in most competing lenses), ensuring precise MF and far more rotational control for pro video users. An important feature is that the front element is coated with fluorine. It repels water and oil. The near circular aperture is made of 9 rounded blades.

## Handling

Both the 45mm and 35mm are the company's first lenses to be made all metal. It feels sturdy, comfortably lightweight, and is at home in the hand and on the D750, the D810 and the D7200 as well. I found myself using the MF override almost as frequently as using AF. MF is wonderfully functional and the ring has a nice heft to it.

In the MF mode, I frequently resort to using hyperfocal distances and this is one

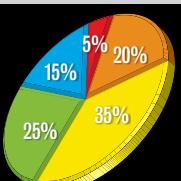
## PLUS

- Weathersealed
- Close focusing
- VC
- Sharpness
- Price

## MINUS

- Slow AF
- No DOF markings

## WEIGHTAGE OF PARAMETERS



- Features
- Performance
- Build Quality
- Ergonomics
- Warranty & Support

## SPECIFICATIONS

Model name	Tamron SP 45mm f/1.8 Di VC USD
MRP	Rs. 47,500
Lens construction	10 elements in 8 groups
Closest focusing distance	0.29m
Max. Magnification	1:3.4 or 0.29x
Diaphragm blades	9 blades, rounded
Max. Aperture	f/1.8
Dimensions, Weight	80.4 x 89.2mm, 520g



The sharpness wide open, and quality of bokeh is excellent. While some flare and highlight fringing reduces the overall contrast, these very properties can be used positively as well.

Exposure: 1/800sec at f/1.8 (ISO 640)

K Madhavan Pillai

of the first things I learn about a new block lens. There is a window that provides a clearly visible distance scale. However, there is no DOF marking, not even the barebones f/11 or f/16 found on other AF lenses. This is also because the distance window is small for the total ring rotation of this lens. For a lens meant for a technical user, this would have helped.

### Performance

A reason to use the AF override frequently is because AF is rather slow, especially from the minimum distance to about 6 feet, owing to the large focus range. From 6 feet to infinity, focus locks much faster, though still slightly slower than competing high-end blocks. Perhaps including a focus limiting function would have been useful. VC works well, letting me shoot handheld at 1/8 sec with an average of 70% of the shots sharp.

The optics is where the 45mm shines. Sharpness at f/1.8 is excellent at the centre, and very good at the edges. f/4 to f/5.6 marks the sweet spot, though sharpness across the range is a notch higher than its Nikon and

Canon counterparts. Where the segment-leading Sigma Art 50mm gets ahead is in its critical control over highlight fringing and flare at its widest apertures. It makes a difference in the overall contrast, especially visible when shooting high key against the sun. Where the Tamron edges the Sigma out is its bokeh, foreground and background, which is fantastically soft-edged, round, and creamy... its standout optical quality.

### Conclusion

Advanced users of this focal length, who know how to get the best out of the close-focusing capabilities, VC, weathersealing and superb bokeh will find that the 45mm expands the scope of possibilities over competing lenses dramatically, making its price of Rs. 47,500 worth it. The Sigma Art 50mm remains the only serious competition. It is a larger lens, offers optical brilliance, f/1.4, and faster AF, but lacks the features that make the Tamron unique. It is also priced about 50% higher. In terms of what's on offer for the price, the Tamron SP 45mm comes highly recommended. **BP**

## FINAL RATINGS

Features	18/20
VC, weathersealing, fluorine coating, 180 degree MF ring rotation	
Performance	30/35
Superb bokeh, excellent sharpness at f/1.8, slightly slow autofocus speed	
Build Quality	24/25
Aluminium barrel, inspires confidence	
Ergonomics	12/15
Good handling, lightweight, large switches, broad, ridged focus ring	
Warranty & Support	3/5
Four-year warranty if bought and registered by end of year, two-year warranty otherwise	

## OVERALL 88%

**Who should buy it?** Advanced photographers and serious enthusiasts interested in technical portraiture, still life and landscapes. It can be extended to street photography as well, with hyperfocal distances.

**Why?** This lens and this focal length in particular is best suited to those with knowledge of various lens techniques.

**Value for Money**



Tokina AT-X 24-70mm f/2.8 PRO FX

# The Sharp Heavyweight

Tokina's latest offering has arrived, presenting proprietary lenses of that focal length a new challenge. Supriya Joshi sees if the Tokina AT-X 24-70mm f/2.8 PRO FX succeeds.

34

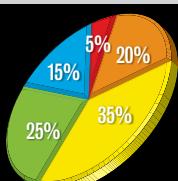
**A**nnounced during CP+ in Japan this year, the Tokina AT-X 24-70mm f/2.8 PRO FX lens is the company's latest offering for full frame cameras. In this particular focal range, it is also happens to be Tokina's first AF lens. This lens is available for both Canon EF and Nikon F mounts. Over the years, with resolutions increasing rapidly, optical finesse in the high-end standard zoom has become the holy grail for manufacturers. I paired the 24-70mm with both a Nikon D750 and D810 to see if it matches up.

## Features

The lens has 15 elements in 11 groups, including three all-glass aspherical elements. To prevent ghosting and flaring, the elements are multicoated. Nine rounded aperture blades make bokeh, especially at the larger apertures.

Unlike the Canon and Nikon versions of the lens, the whole focus ring acts as a switch between AF and MF—a trademark Tokina feature. I found it infinitely more useful than a small switch on the side, or a lever on the camera. The eye does not need to leave the viewfinder and the hand does not have to stray from the lens to enable this. I did not miss the full-time AF override feature, available in competing lenses, because of this.

### WEIGHTAGE OF PARAMETERS



- Features
- Performance
- Build Quality
- Ergonomics
- Warranty & Support

## Handling

Weighing 1010g, the Tokina 24-70mm is heavier than all but Nikon's latest version, the 24-70mm f/2.8E ED VR. Despite this, it is also a rather short lens, and comfortably 'snug'. The all metal build feels wonderfully sturdy. Both the zoom and focus rings are quite broad, and differently textured to compensate for the two separate levels of heft on rotation. Unlike its proprietary counterparts, the lens, however, is not weathersealed. It also does not feature image stabilisation, unlike the new Nikkor and the current Tamron 24-70mm.

In the manual focusing mode, the lens rotates by about 35° from end to end of the distance scale, a much smaller degree of rotation than its competitors. It allows you the convenience of simply using your fingers to move across the entire focus range, without removing your hand from

## PLUS

- Sharpness
- Comparatively affordable

## MINUS

- No stabilisation
- Quite heavy

## SPECIFICATIONS

Model name	Tokina AT-X 24-70mm f/2.8 PRO FX
MRP	Rs. 90,000
Lens construction	15 elements in 11 groups
Closest focusing distance	0.38m
Max. Magnification	1:4.73
Diaphragm blades	9
Max. Aperture	2.8
Dimensions, Weight	89.6 x 107.5mm, 1010g

The level of comfort that I had with the Tokina allowed me to get plenty of images that I was quite happy with. It is surprising how good handling contributes to this.

Exposure: 1/3200sec at f/5 (ISO 500)

TEST



Supriya Joshi

below the lens. It is also quite accurate. However, it is also disadvantageous for video users, where pulling focus slowly and smoothly between far and near points becomes difficult.

### Performance

The most important aspect of a high-end standard zoom is sharpness, and it is certainly the highlight of this lens. The images it produces display an excellent level of consistent sharpness across the frame and through the zoom range, even on the D810, with images viewed at 100%. Wide open at 24mm, there is a slight loss at the edges, but this is well controlled. At the narrowest apertures, there is barely any loss in sharpness due to diffraction. In its category, the Tokina 24–70mm is the sharpest we have tested so far.

There is a slight barrel distortion at 24mm, but with a complex signature, which is not so easy to correct in postprocessing. A negligible amount of pincushion distortion can also be seen at 50mm and 70mm, that can be corrected easily. The lens was able to handle flaring reasonably well. At the widest apertures,

specular bokeh show hard edges and granular textures, which is a problem, especially with portraits with spots of light in the background.

The AF speed is good, but not exceptional. It is actuated with a SDM (Silent Drive-Module) motor, which isn't absolutely quiet, but not loud enough to distract either.

### Conclusion

The Tokina AT-X 24–70mm f/2.8 PRO FX is priced at Rs. 90,000, making it one of the most affordable lenses in its segment, and especially when compared to proprietary lenses from Nikon or Canon. The closest competitor in price is the Tamron SP 24–70mm F/2.8 Di VC USD, at Rs. 81,700. It features Vibration Compensation and weatherproofing, but not the same level of sharpness and build. Considering the weight of the Tokina, stabilisation is a feature I missed, but the benefits are plenty for a professional user. Eventually, the combination of handling finesse, and capability of capturing tack sharp images on high resolution sensors, makes it an investment well worth the money. **EP**

## FINAL RATINGS

### Features

16/20

Multicoated all-glass aspherical elements, no image stabilisation, fast f/2.8 aperture

### Performance

33/35

Great sharpness, good AF capabilities, negligible barrel and pincushion distortion

### Build Quality

22/25

Heavy, metal construction, not weathersealed

### Ergonomics

13/15

Push-pull mechanism for AF/MF, short focus travel, quick handling

### Warranty & Support

3/5

Two-year warranty, limited service centres

# OVERALL 87%

**Who should buy it?** Professional photographers who are looking to buy a f/2.8 standard zoom lens.

**Why?** The Tokina lens is a truly capable contender against the proprietary lenses of the same type. It performs really well, and its comparatively affordable price makes it a great purchase.

**Value for Money**



Yongnuo YN600EX-RT

# Separated at Birth?

You may be forgiven if you assume that the **Yongnuo YN600EX-RT** is a sibling of its far-more-expensive Canon counterpart. **Raj Lalwani** puts this high-end flashgun to the test.

**L**ook at the Yongnuo from afar and you'd surely hear dramatic music, the kind that usually accompanies a family reunion scene in a Hindi movie potboiler. How did a third-party company manage to achieve such similarity to Canon's designs? Sure, camera manufacturing history has seen remakes, clones and copies, but the Yongnuo is particularly uncanny, down to some details. Second, are there any differences in the way the YN600EX-RT actually behaves, when put to the test? Third, if you get a Canon-like flash for one-fourth the price, would you actually buy the original one? What does one gain or lose?

## Features

The YN600EX-RT is a high-end flashgun that is compatible with Canon's new 2.4GHz RT radio system that the proprietary 600EX-RT strobe features. The radio system allows TTL triggering and

strobe control in a setup that's easier and more reliable than IR, especially as it does not involve direct line-of-sight mechanisms and will also work through obstacles.

The other features seem identical as well. The Guide Number is 197' at ISO 100 and 200mm. The zoom head has an excellent range of 20–200mm (14mm with wide-angle panel). A Power Saving mode

## PLUS

- Feature packed
- Consistent
- Price

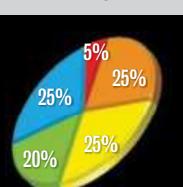
## MINUS

- Build quality not as great

## SPECIFICATIONS

Model name	Yongnuo YN600EX-RT
MRP	USD 118.99 (approx. Rs. 7700)
Guide Number	197' at ISO 100 (at 200mm)
Exposure Control	Manual/TTL/Auto/Slave/Wireless
Bounce Head	Yes, -7° to +90°
Swivel Head	Yes, 180°
Coverage	20–200 mm
Dimensions (W x H x D)	200 x 75 x 65mm
Weight	420g

## WEIGHTAGE OF PARAMETERS



- Features
- Performance
- Build Quality
- Ergonomics
- Warranty & Support



TEST

I personally missed a warming gel, but with critical control over shutter speed and illumination, you can still control the final look of your photo.  
Exposure: 1/20sec at f/9 (ISO 1000)

37

and overheating protection are two of the important features.

Interestingly, the Yongnuo is not sold with colour filters or gels. If you wish to balance ambient light conditions of different temperatures, experimenting with gels is an absolute must, and this is quite an oversight with the Yongnuo.

#### Handling

The design of the Yongnuo is a near copy of the Canon, right down to the tiniest of details in terms of what button lies where. But hold the flashgun in your hand and you'll immediately realise the difference. The Yongnuo is a third of the price, and it definitely lacks the premium feeling that Canon's flagship flashgun has. The YN600EX-RT is made up of cheaper, softer plastics. The battery doors are flimsy and the rubber port-covers do not stay on. The flash head swivels without needing to press any buttons.

Ergonomically, this is a complex flashgun, but if you invest time in studying its various possibilities and modes, you will be able to make good use of it. There are some nice touches that the Yongnuo has. One, it has a battery level indicator that is accurate and useful. The LCD screen is easier to read,

in fact. The autofocus-assist beam of the flashgun is quite unique, brighter than other flashes and thus, more useful.

#### Performance

The YN600EX-RT performed admirably in our tests. It is powerful, consistent and versatile. The recycling time is admirably fast. Colour rendition is accurate, though there are times that the flash has had a tendency of being a little too cool-toned. Power efficiency seems to be a problem as the batteries I was using kept running out faster than they would have, otherwise.

#### Conclusion

I can understand some users having concerns about the Yongnuo, preferring to stay with the proprietary brand that they trust. Especially, if you are a seasoned pro who needs a workhorse flashgun to make pictures in tough conditions, you may want to skip the Yongnuo YNEX600-RT. On the other hand, strobists, particularly those who wish to control a great number of flashguns simultaneously, will look at the Yongnuo favourably. Even though the build quality is a lot inferior, you can literally buy four such flashguns for the price of one Canon flagship. 

## FINAL RATINGS

Features	23/25
Performance	23/25
Build Quality	16/20
Ergonomics	22/25
Warranty & Support	1/5

## OVERALL 85%

**Who should buy it?** Student photographers wanting a high-end, but inexpensive flashgun.

**Why?** This is one of the most incredibly feature-packed flashguns in the market, and it's only a fraction of the cost of the product it takes maximum inspiration from.

**Value for Money** 

Better

# Cellphone

# Photography



## FOR THE LOVE OF LIGHT

Bredun Edwards takes you on unforgettable journeys in B&W vignettes

■ What goes behind the making of a photobook?

■ Exclusive: How does the HTC One M9+ fare on our test bench?

# Editorial

**“Recognising your personal preference is key to becoming a better and happier photographer.”**



## Another Year, Another Moment of Reflection

I blinked my eyes on 1 January 2015, and I was transported straight to the end of November 2015... or at least that's what it felt like. Time, as a concept, is fleeting, yet we do not really acknowledge this fact. Most of us simply trudge on, without stopping for a second to think. Thankfully, as photographers, we have no choice but to reflect—on the pictures we have made, on the moments we have witnessed and on the innumerable photographic possibilities that we can come across. For me, the monthly edit note is my way to have a moment for my thoughts, and today I'm thinking about the year that was and what I learned in it.

The first thing I learnt, and it was not easy to learn, is that the most important person I need to make happy with my photographs, is me. Maybe a style of photography is in trend, maybe my colleagues prefer a certain type of photograph... but do I? Recognising your personal preference is key to becoming a better and happier photographer. The second lesson this year was about unlearning what I have already learnt. Too often, I found myself thinking about the rules, which would get me to question my own photographic abilities. This led me to conclude—there is no rule that cannot be broken (unless it's an enforced law, in which case, don't break it!), so it is okay to follow your own vision, if it leads to a better photograph.

Third, it's okay to not want to shoot. Not feeling the urge to make pictures does not mean you will never shoot again. It's okay to take a break, you will feel that need to shoot when the time is right... you may end up shooting with a whole new vision. And finally, I learnt to let go. Let go of all my fears, insecurities and prejudices I have about making pictures. If you enjoy what you shoot instead of overthinking every small thing, it will show. And it is this pursuit of happiness, that I am now after. Happy shooting in 2016!



**Supriya Joshi**  
supriya.j@network18publishing.com

39



### That was then, this is now

by Bredun Edwards

“Making a picture is sort of like capturing someone's soul. It is a single private moment that is frozen forever.”

Read more about Bredun Edwards journey into the world of cellphone photography — ‘For the Love of Light’ Turn to page 48

To see the winning images from the Readers’ Gallery Contest — ‘Winter Bliss’ Turn to page 54

Cover photograph by Bredun Edwards

**“If you take a picture of a human that does not make him noble, there is no reason to take his picture.”**

**SEBASTIÃO SALGADO**

The prolific Brazilian photographer has traversed the earth and brought to light some of the most incredible stories. The social documentary photographer and photojournalist is also a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador and is renowned for his photobooks.



HTC One M9+

# A Two-in-One Camera Setup

With one of the most innovative camera features in recent times, will the HTC One M9+ make the cut? Natasha Desai finds out.

**W**hen launched, the HTC One made waves in the Android market for its unibody metal design and camera performance. Its last avatar, the HTC One M9 flagship, however received considerable criticism for not having significant improvements over its predecessors, prompting the hasty release of the M9+, an upgraded version. HTC seems to have packed in all its cameras from the last three editions into this one. The M9+ has a 4MP 'UltraPixel' front facing camera for low light selfies. The rear features the quirky Duo Camera, but with the option of simply using the 20-megapixel camera, also seen in the M9.

**With this image, I tried using the depth control feature, but it produced unsatisfactory results. In the end, I went with the original.**



## The Feel of the Phone

Despite being a bigger phone (5-inch Quad HD display, all metal unibody design), it sits rather comfortably in the hand. The excellent build inspires confidence. It allows single-handed operation.

## How it Fares

The 20MP Duo Camera at f/2.2 manages to produce sharp images. While the phone's display has a tendency to oversaturate warmer colours, they are near accurate when viewed on a computer screen. The display fares pretty well in bright light and I was able to view images without too much trouble. The autofocus is good and is able to lock on to moving subjects quite fast, and there

**With this image, I tried using the depth control feature, but it produced unsatisfactory results. In the end, I went with the original.**



All photographs by Natasha Desai



● I was reasonably happy with the surprisingly good amount of details and textures that the M9+ was able to capture.

is minimal shutter lag when shooting. However, the quirks afflicting the M9 has followed the M9+. I found that the highlights tend to get blown out. They can be controlled via photo editing apps, but then this is an unnecessary additional step.

The native camera app lets you switch between Duo Camera and high resolution modes, where the former is supposed to use the additional camera for more detail and depth of field control. It also aids refocus after capturing an image, I found the difference between the two modes quite negligible, and other cellphones manage the same thing without two sensors.

There are a few other features such as double exposure, dimension plus and shapes that can be added on to the photo. They feel gimmicky at best. I was also unimpressed with the camera app UI which felt clumsy and unintuitive.

In terms of the phone's lifespan, its battery life at 2840mAh fared surprisingly well. After several hours of continuous shooting outdoors, the phone still had enough juice to go on.

## In Conclusion

For a flagship priced at Rs. 52,990, the M9+ fails to deliver in terms of camera. If you already have the M8, then this may not be the upgrade you were waiting for. Also, there have been far better flagships that have been released since the M9+'s launch, like the Samsung Galaxy S6, which would be a better investment. While not exactly in the same segment, even the One Plus Two priced at Rs. 24,999 at 13MP and a fantastic UI, would be a better option. □

## AT A GLANCE

SPECIFICATIONS	20MP, Android 5.0.2, MediaTek Helio X10 octa core 2.2 GHz, 3 GB RAM, 32GB storage (expandable up to 128 GB), Rs. 52,990
WHAT WE LIKE	Ergonomics, good colour in images
WHAT WE DISLIKE	Average camera quality and performance
WHY BUY IT?	The phone looks good and is not bad as a phone to use. Don't buy it for the camera however.

## FINAL RATINGS

CAMERA FEATURES	Pro controls, 20MP, 5MP front camera	20/25
IMAGE QUALITY	Good sharpness and near accurate colour reproduction	25/30
VIDEO QUALITY	Good quality 4K video at 30fps	13/15
HANDLING	Smooth and easy to hold	12/15
SPEED & RESPONSIVENESS	Good speed with not too much lag	13/15



Press proofs are exciting, but crucial, as this is where the final changes are marked, so that the tonality is rendered exactly as per one's vision.

## Hot Off the Press! An iPhone Photobook

In an interview with **Raj Lalwani**, Amit Mehra speaks about *Roznaama*, his daily musings, his cellphone diary, his stream of single images, and now, his photobook.

**A**round two and a half years ago, *Better Photography* became the first print publication in India (and probably in the world), to legitimise the cameraphone as a serious photographic tool. It was, thus, a marriage of sorts, when photographer Amit Mehra chose to collaborate with us, to let us (and thus, you) in to their world of

cameraphone imagemaking. "This may be a book some day," I remember Amit telling me, when he had sent us the first photograph for his innings within Cellphone Diaries (which ends with this piece).

Persian in its origins, 'Roznaama', or 'Roz' 'naama', implies a series of daily documentations, much like a diary, or a series of notings, if you may. It is the

term 'roz' that throws up an interesting connotation though. Is this book a diary of a photographer, the daily sketches of his visual mind? Or is it, not just every day's notes, but also notes from the everyday, photographic musings of life, as it exists, in all its magic and monotony, and all the magic within the monotony.

**"A few  
photographer  
friends and  
I were chatting,  
cribbing that the  
cameraphone  
is killing  
photography.  
After returning  
home, though,  
I kept thinking  
to myself... how  
can a camera kill  
photography?**

It feels inconsequential to say that this is a book of cellphone photographs. To correlate the identity of a body of work with the gear that has been used to create it, is lazy conversation that lacks nuance. The mood, stories and photographic vision that defines *Roznaama* transcends the fact that it has been shot with an iPhone.

## Roznaama



Amit Mehra

➲ The cover of the book is quiet, much like the photos that lie inside. A size of seven and a half inches, in terms of height, means that this is a very small, intimate book, much like a diary.



### Stringing the Images Together

One of the great challenges was to string together this series of singles, which, on the surface, had nothing to do with each other. "But though the subjects were varied," says Amit, "there were two common elements: The first was me, as a subject... these were traces of my daily life, my daughter, my family, my travels, routine. The second, of course, was me, as the photographer."

Editing was a fascinating process, he tells me, as he went about discovering visual associations between photographs that were made instinctively, often several

• **Roznama** is an excellent study in terms of how a wide variety of genres of photography can come together.

months apart, in different spaces and places.

"Cinema is my greatest inspiration while making an edit. Try watching any great movie on mute, and observe how one scene flows into another. Often, it's just a subtle visual connect that pulls the viewer through without making him feel disoriented. One mysterious figure may lead to another, three winged symbols of peace may be followed by framed symbols of freedom."

• The book has no textual clues, forcing the viewer to engage with it on a deeper level and draw into one's own memories to decipher what he or she is feeling.

### Beyond the Photographs

The photographs are only half the battle, as there are several hurdles to be





crossed and questions to be answered, before a serious body of work becomes a tangible book. How big or small will the book be? What paper should be used? Will there be text? Should the layout be clean or busy? That a seemingly casual device like the cameraphone can create a delicate book like *Roznaama*,

where every single photographic and publishing decision has been made after considered, deliberate thought, may seem like a paradox to some. But for Amit, and several other photographers worldwide who have championed the cause of the cameraphone, it is just another tool, to achieve their vision. **EP**

● The book was self published and officially launched at the recently concluded Delhi Photo Festival. It will be available online for Rs. 650.

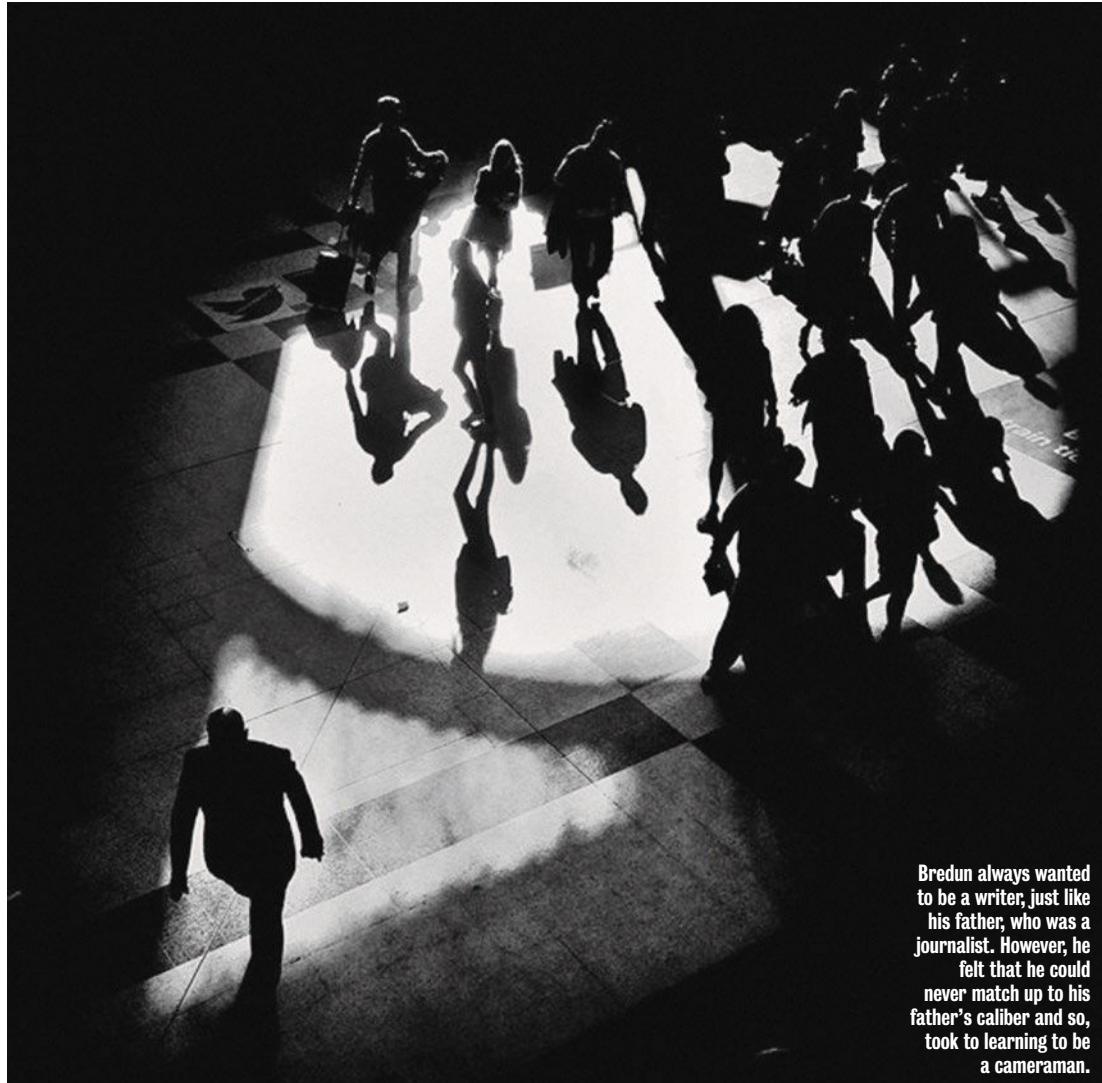
**Maintaining a memoir is not just about its final pages, but also about the process of creating it—the searching that happens within one's soul, the relentless pursuit of intermingling memories.**



● With *Roznaama*, Amit is sharing his freedom, his joys, his insecurities, his uncertainties. His *roz*. “Only in the moment of spotting an image, I am truly alive. I make a photograph and the photograph makes me. I capture an image and it liberates me. *Qaid tasveer hoti hai. Aazaad mein.*”


**Bredun Edwards**

- He is an award-winning news video journalist, who has covered events in places like Iraq, Afghanistan and Somalia.
- His favourite movie is *The English Patient* and he loves it for the cinematography by John Seale.
- He likes to call himself a 'happy-go-lucky iphoneographer.'



Bredun always wanted to be a writer, just like his father, who was a journalist. However, he felt that he could never match up to his father's caliber and so, took to learning to be a cameraman.

# For the Love of Light

Bredun Edwards talks to Conchita Fernandes about his recent journey using the cameraphone, and how it has changed his way of seeing.

**O**ne of the most important lessons of being an artist is possessing humility. This quality becomes even more crucial when you are a photographer, because to transcend the thin line that separates you from your subject, you have to come from a humble place.

Moreover, you have to be modest if you want to learn more. This comes only after you have accepted that an artist never really reaches his zenith, because it's quite impossible to know everything there is to know. Bredun Edwards, a new member of

the cellphone photography club, to me, embodied this important value.

### The Critical Juncture

With over two decades of experience in video journalism, Bredun is not new to the world of cameras. However, he wholeheartedly took to photography only last year, after his father was diagnosed with cancer. "Photography became therapeutic. I found solace in its embrace."

The iPhone was instrumental here, as he was quite blown away with what it could achieve in terms of quality. But the

**"A photograph is so much more intimate than a video. It's the perfect soul capturer."**

**FIND BREDUN HERE!**

- Instagram: [@bredun\\_e](https://www.instagram.com/bredun_e)
- Website: [www.bredunedwards.com](http://www.bredunedwards.com)



Heavy shadowed and obscure characters make a recurring appearance in his work. To him, this is an exercise about exploring his psyche.

real turning point was when he shot a photograph at an airport. "I remember walking by and I noticed how the silhouetted figures of the passengers reflected on the floor of the terminal. I had this sudden compulsion to photograph the scene. Maybe it was its symmetry that attracted me to it. All the photographs I have shot since have been a result of that one important moment," he said.



### A Different Way of Seeing

However, there was a lot of learning to do, especially teaching himself to see with a cameraphone. "All this while I had been shooting with a video camera.

That's essentially how I have been viewing my surroundings, in motion. Since I cannot hold the phone to my eye, like how I would with a DSLR or video camera, I had to start all over again. Moreover, shooting stills is an ▶

Bredun describes his personality to be one of an introverted nature. Yet, in his street work, it is hard to decipher this aspect of his character.



According to him, every person can be photographed beautifully. The decisive moment is always present, unless you are unable to find the matrix of light.



① Sometimes, during the editing stage, it is quite possible for the artist to get carried away. When asked about when does he know to stop, Bredun said, "There have been instances where I have overworked my photographs. I know this when the picture stops looking real. At this point I stop and start all over again," he said.

entirely different ballgame, one that I have had to learn by continuously shooting."

This is why Bredun considers himself to be a student. "I am still learning to see where the light is and how close I can get to my subject." Here I interjected, "But how did you do it with a video camera? Isn't it the same?" To this he replied, "Yes, but I never had this problem with a video camera. I think that it's because photography, to me, is much more intimate than shooting a video of an individual. Making a picture is sort of like capturing someone's soul. It is a single private moment that is frozen forever, as opposed to a video that captures an entire

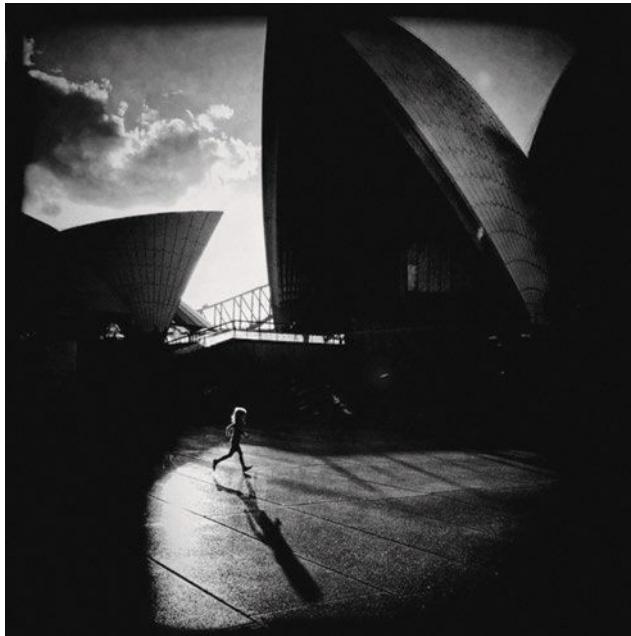
sequence, without really concentrating on that one profound expression. I guess that is why a lot of people are quite wary of photographers than they are of videographers."

#### Making a Moment Yours

Bredun loves the look and feel of high contrast pictures. He likes how it brings out the stark lines created by light and shadow, thus guiding the viewer into following a pathway in the image. Most of the time it's a person who commandeers this sense of direction, thanks to Bredun's strong compositional skills.

#### INSTAFOLLOW NOW

Eyes on China Project (@eyesonchinaproject) will give you not just an in-depth but also a multifaceted look of the most populated country in the world, as told through the eyes of various visual storytellers.



Another element that seems to take a recurring role on his Instagram feed is the ambiguous fedora-clad figure, who I like to call hat man. Bredun is fascinated by this figure. "The hat man, to me, is a reminder of different things—of my deceased

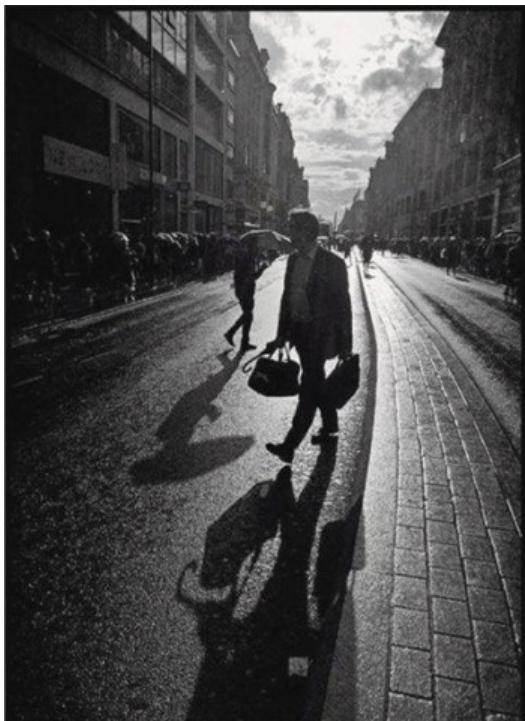
grandfather, of Humphrey Bogart in Paris and of a longing for the past," he said.

Contrary to what most people have to say about the attention that the subject continues to receive today, Bredun comments, "But the hat man was always popular. He has been around in Robert Frank's and Cartier-Bresson's photographs." He went on to say that almost every subject matter that we see today in images, are things that have been captured previously. He also feels that great artists are those who take from what already exists and make improvements. He equates this to stealing, which according to him, is better

He uses various apps like Hipstamatic, Scratchcam and several others, to render the effects that you see in his photographs.

### Tips on Learning to be a Good Photographer

- **Be Thirsty for Knowledge:** Always be a student and learn, learn and learn some more. Don't ever stop being curious. Ask questions all the time.
- **Make a Lot of Mistakes:** Teachers do not quite stress enough on the importance of making blunders. Errors are good, because everytime that you make one, you become aware of one more method or step that you should abandon.
- **Find Your Footing:** In order to learn not to copy, you have to mimic occasionally. By doing so, you will eventually get around to discovering your own voice and vision.



Every time that he goes out to shoot, Bredun's eyes are always searching for the direction of light. However, this can sometimes be a task as the UK is known for its moody weather, he mentions.

than copying. "That's what Richard Koci Hernandez has done. He has taken the hat man and given him a more enigmatic persona. To me, he is a masterful thief, and I say this with the utmost respect. Koci is a painter who knows exactly what he's doing."

#### Letting Your Photographs Breathe

In an era where people are hasty to churn out images, only to delete them later, Bredun

has decided to take a different approach, one which involves being patient. He prefers putting up pictures only after the image has rested for a bit. "You have to give yourself some space to enjoy the process and not rush it. Who knows, you may not be as excited about a photograph as you were a day or two ago," he mentioned.

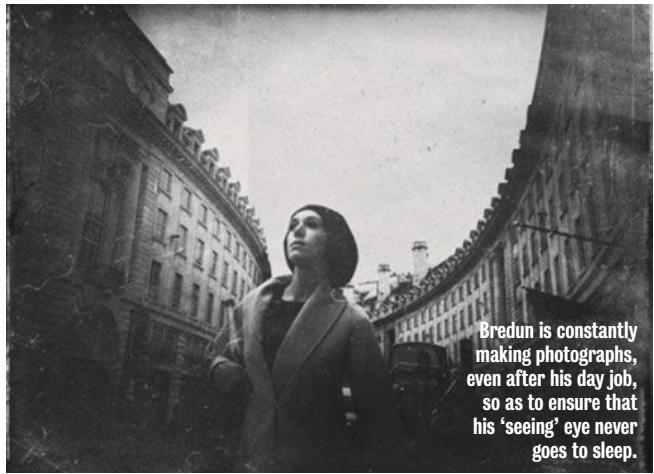
As he goes about capturing snippets of fleeting moments, I see someone who

"I would love to quit my job one day, and turn into a nomadic cellphone photographer, where I get to travel across the globe, documenting my vision with the iPhone."



Contrary to his reportage work, Bredun's cellphone photos take on a more fleeting and dreamy feeling.

spends a lot of time working and reworking his images. Also, if you look at his feed, you will notice how he has gradually moved away from the scratchy-looking images. As he continues on this path of learning and



Bredun is constantly making photographs, even after his day job, so as to ensure that his 'seeing' eye never goes to sleep.

self-exploration, Bredun is also very keen to shoot pictures of a photojournalistic nature. "Since I travel a lot, it would be interesting to see how I am able to express my vision with subjects who I don't usually encounter." **BP**



A recurring theme in his work is the superimposing of images. Aside from being a medium of self-expression, he also considers this activity to be a way of learning the tools of the trade, which include various editing apps. For him, the experimentation never ends.

# READERS' GALLERY

*Better Cellphone Photography's* readers were challenged to bring out the hues and colours of the winter season in this month's contest.

Presented by



## Winner

54



### ➲ Mystical Mornings

Nehal Chaturvedi, Vellore

**What made me shoot this:** An early morning walk one winter's day found me in the presence of this fascinating scene. The fog and the subdued lighting juxtaposed with the trees made for a very supernatural moment. **What I learnt:** The best photographs come from the most unexpected moments, so it's good to always be prepared. **Shot with:** Xiaomi Mi 3

## Honourable Mention

### ➲ The Colours of Winter

Sirsendu Gayen, Kolkata

**What made me shoot this:** Blues and whites are colours usually associated with the colder months. However, this beautiful transcendental hues of nature compelled me to shoot.

**What I learnt:** Question conventions and think out of the box.

The images you make are a reflection of how you think.

**Shot with:** Microsoft Lumia 540 Dual SIM



To be featured on these pages, participate in our contests by logging on to [betterphotography.in/contests](http://betterphotography.in/contests) and win exciting prizes!

## Honourable Mention



① **Natural Noir**  
Udayan Sankar Pal,  
Bengaluru

**What made me shoot this:**  
One early morning at Nandi Hills, I was amidst heavy fog and low lying clouds. Unfolding before me were mysterious shadows between wet tree boughs, which I captured for my memory.

**What I learnt:** Be observant and patient and you will be rewarded with your desired shot.

**Shot with:** Apple iPhone 6 Plus

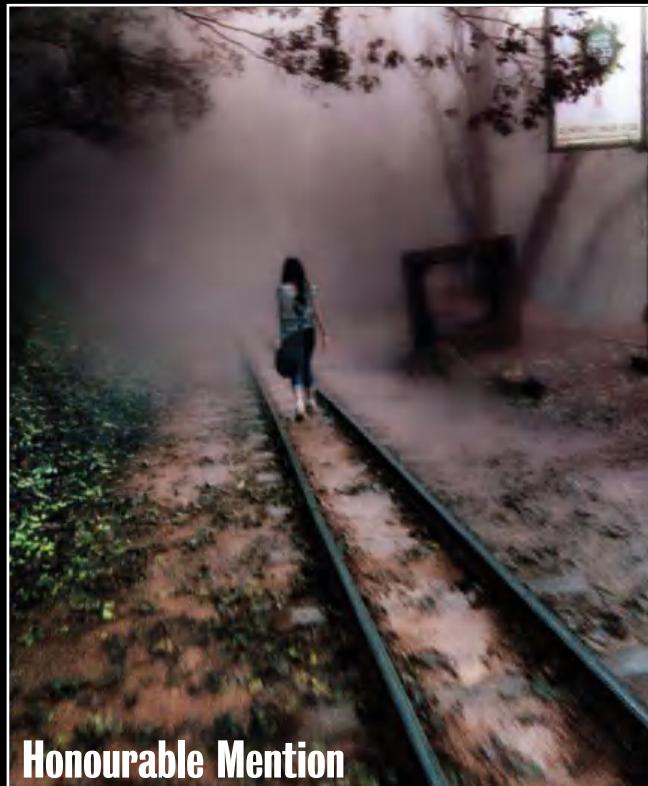
## GRAND PRIZE

The grand prize winner, gets a 4200mAh Godrej GP PowerBank, the perfect companion for cellphone and travel photographers.



All the nominees will also be featured on [betterphotography.in](http://betterphotography.in).

\*Actual colour of the Powerbank may vary



## Honourable Mention

② **To the Unknown**  
Tushar Hingorani, Mumbai

**What made me shoot this:**  
This scene reminded me of a horror movie. The dense fog added to the eeriness of it all. As my friend walked along the train tracks, I made a photo.

**What I learnt:** Movies can inspire photography, and vice versa.

**Shot with:** YU Yureka

**Godrej GP**  
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- Portable Powerbanks

# Better Pictures



## Where the Streets Have No Name

Raj Lalwani speaks to ten of the finest emerging street photographers in India to get an insight into their motivations, insecurities, preferred techniques and visual inspirations.

Often undervalued in a day and age where the value of the single image is treated with some suspicion, street photography remains one of the most inclusive, and thus, one of the most important kinds of photography that there is. After all, how do you even talk

about something that happens in a fraction of a second, since what you see, why you see it, what you do and how you do it, are all subconscious decisions that just cannot be explained? It's like breathing, one may say, or the beating of one's heart, which is involuntary, reflexive, but does go faster when you see something you love.

**SHOOTING TECHNIQUE**

Arindam Thokder on how light influences the composition

76

**SHOOTING TECHNIQUE**

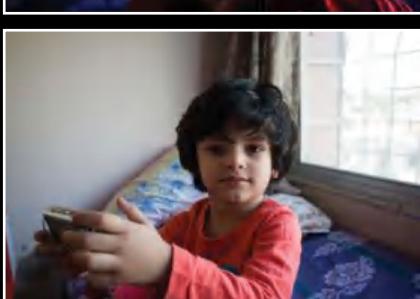
Dhruv Dhakan on why street photography goes beyond the streets

96

**ON ASSIGNMENT**

Nick Gentry makes montage portraits with discarded materials

100



My conversations with these ten street photographers over the past month and half, made me recognise these seemingly involuntary spells of magic that they cast. It also helped me realise that to define their process merely as mere 'instinct', is myopic. The word 'instinct' refers to something innate, one that you cannot learn, while street photography, much like all of photography, rewards perspective, vision and rigour, all of which are honed, over time.

Time is the key, one that we often forget while romanticising the discourse with words like the moment. Cartier-Bresson, who made the idea of the decisive moment

famous, once told Alex Webb that "there are often multiple potential moments to discover in many situations—and that different photographers will find different moments."

The following forty pages will give us a glimpse of what these ten exciting photographic voices may find.

*"The contact sheet is like the analyst's couch. It's also a kind of seismograph, recording the instant. It's all there, what surprises us is what we catch, what we miss, what disappears. Or else an event that fulfills itself as an image."*

— Henri Cartier-Bresson

**The greatest of street photographers just walk. They walk and they walk and they allow the place to talk. They walk and watch, and wait and watch, and then, walk again.**

Photographs by (L-R): Swarat Ghosh, Virod Babu, Subrata Biswas, Monica Tiwari, Dhruv Dhakan, Swapnil Jodhpur



# It's All About Emotion....

“Sometimes, I keep talking to people and then miss the moment,” says Swarat Ghosh, “but now I train myself to look through the viewfinder, even while continuing the conversation,” he says, on the sensory experience of his street photography practice.



It's very easy and very difficult to photograph kids. To get a nice frame is easy. A special moment, however, is often elusive, a reward for the times when I am truly patient.

W herever we go in India, crowds are bound to follow. But what drives me to shoot on the streets is the unexpected isolated moment in the midst of all the chaos. And for this, gesture is everything. Light and composition are important, sure, but expression and emotion are what I gravitate towards.

### On Getting Up Close

There was a time when I would shoot with an ultrawide, but I realised that I was only getting caught up in the shock effect that it offers. Now, I have settled on the 24mm. This focal length is not easy either. It's after a year of practice that I know exactly how far I must stand and the height at which I should shoot from, to control distortion. To tell a singular story with a 24mm, I need to get closer, one step at a time. If I overstep the line and get too close, I just wait. The subject eventually stops being curious, *yeh toh bas timepass ho raha hai*, he may think, and go back to what he or she is doing. The closer I get, the more invisible I become.

### Training Oneself to Imagine, Preempt

When I wander into a new lane, I look for an interesting background and wait for the theatre to begin. After all, street photography is nothing but a stage, one where multiple ▶

### On Inspiration

My initial heroes were Raghu Rai and Raghbir Singh. More recently, I was greatly moved by the interplay of various elements and mystery and emotion within the daily life captured by Amit Mehra in his book 'Kashmir'.

① I met the legendary Raghu Rai six months ago and he told me that I was falling into a trap of shooting certain kinds of imagery... complicated images with a lot of layers, for instance. Speaking to him made me realise that it's tougher to see simple images.



Be honest, be what you are. Approaching people is not difficult in India, where everyone loves to be photographed.



⌚ A conversation and a smile usually helps, but if the subject gets too conscious, I pretend I am photographing something behind or beside them. Both eyes must be open, one at the viewfinder, the other, to observe any element that may walk in.

actors interact, spontaneously, without a script. If I sense that there are no actors coming by, I shoot an empty frame of just the setting. Once I'm home, I make a print of that empty, sterile frame and start scribbling.

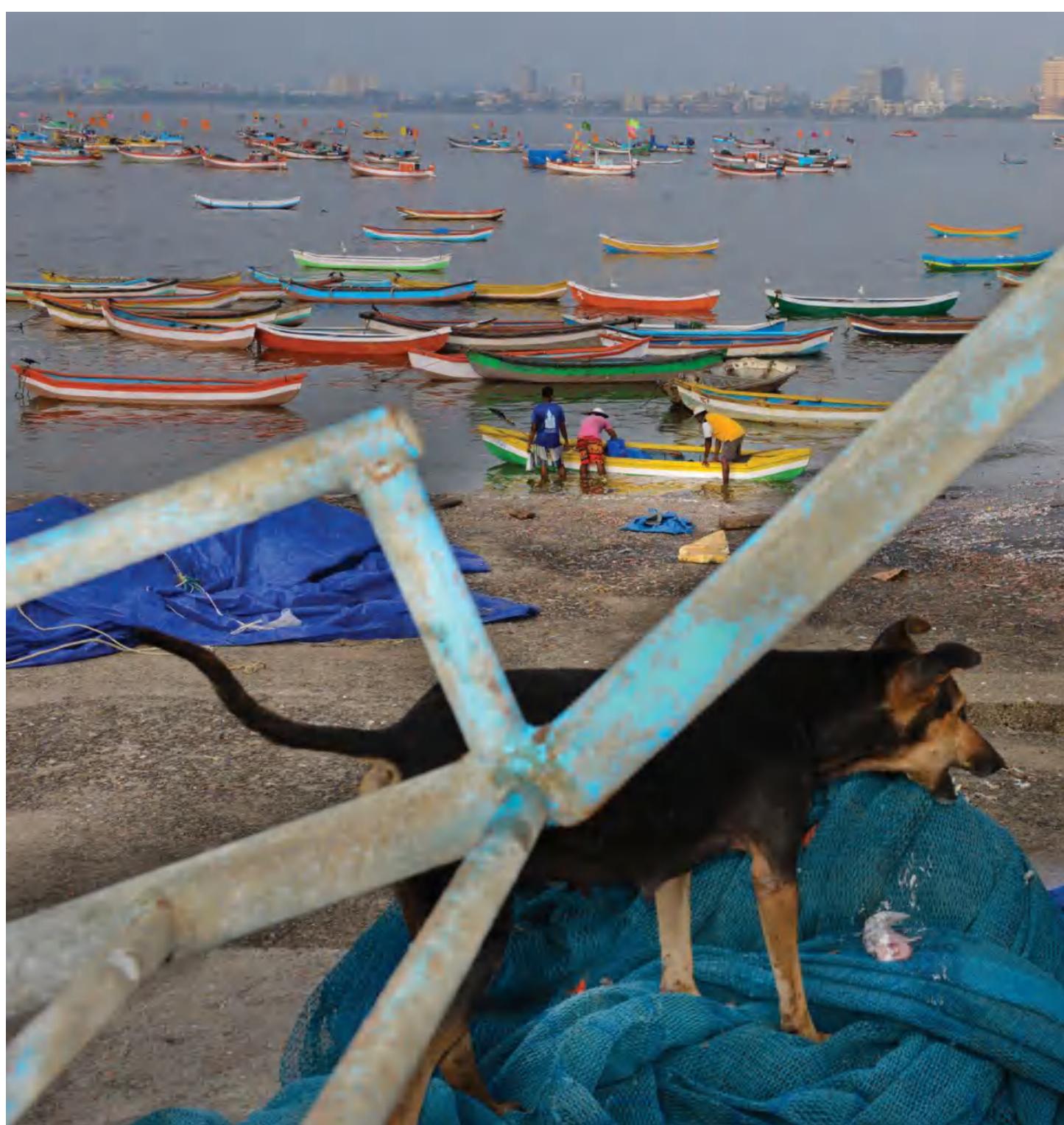
I am visualising, imagining, directing almost. It's a fun exercise that goes with my visual design background, and keeps me alert the next time I see a potential reenactment of my art-directed imagination.

⌚ Printing, I have realised, not only gives craft finesse, but also helps one slow down, allowing the work to evolve over time.

**Craft is important, but technique can sometimes become trickery. Stay true to the drama of the situation rather than the drama of technique.**



*Swarat Ghosh is fascinated by the idea of the old meeting the new, which drives him to seek similar juxtapositions in Hyderabad, where he stays. "Maybe it's the memories of my hometown Kolkata that make me see this way," he says. His work can be seen at [www.thatslife.in/swarat-ghosh](http://www.thatslife.in/swarat-ghosh), and on Instagram (@swaratghosh).*



# Seeking Visual Complexities

“I don’t walk much, actually,” says Monica Tiwari, “maybe I am a lazy photographer. But if I sense something, if I see an opportunity, a frame that may come together, I can stay at the spot for an hour, or more.”



Geometry is one of the first things I am attracted to, after which, it's a matter of realigning and repositioning yourself, while you wait for the moment.

Why do we sense potential or lack of potential in a particular shooting situation? According to me, it's because our brain works with familiarity. When something is familiar, when our brain recognises a memory, that's when we think, ah, there may be a picture around the corner. That's photographic

intuition, I believe, and the more I explore this medium, the more I build my memory bank, and thus, my intuition.

### The Joy of Waiting

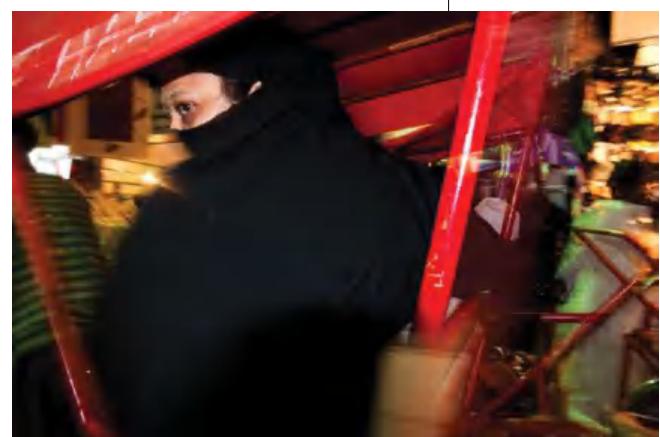
For me, the greatest joy of making an image is in the wait, the *intezaar*. I want to keep working on the image in my head, like someone who is constantly tapping away on a window, waiting for it to open. As different elements walk into the frame, as different formations present themselves, my mind becomes this interweb of complexity. I love complexity. It may just be a series of limbs that present themselves as a geometric pattern, or a series of lines and shapes formed by the juxtapositions merging into each other. I shoot a lot at such moments, working towards the frame, bit by bit. It's strange, though. This whole process of waiting, of taking my own time to spot the best possible formation is, in a way, like settling my own mind.

### Not Just About Street Photography

I'm not shooting on the streets as often as I used to, because I am also working on some documentary and commercial assignments. I am not complaining though. Different kinds of photography feed off each other, and practising one, can help and influence the way you practise the other.

When I do go out, I wander. It could be any place, any time. In fact, high noon is one of my favourite times to make pictures, as I use the on-camera flash so often. Balancing flash with harsh sunlight is a lot of fun. It not only flattens the photo to enhance the kind of complexities I often seek, but also helps me control the way I use colour. ▶

The onboard flash may be tricky to control at first, but once you are familiar with its workings, you will realise that its possibilities are endless, especially in fading light.





66

① Your eyes have to constantly do a dance, watching the foreground, the background and how their relationship evolves.

### All You Need to Do is Belong

We live in divided times, but street photography, for me, is a way of dissolving boundaries. When you go out

with that one camera and lens, you are only following the image... the heart is what leads you and not the mind. You end up visiting places you may otherwise have

① It's uncanny where you may find visual associations and repetitions, as long as you actively seek them.



### On Inspiration

The silence and quietude within Nadav Kander's work across multiple genres, always move me. Inspiration, for me, is not about visual influences. I am in awe of Kander's work because it is a kind of photography, a kind of simplicity, that is so different from the way I see my world. Moreover, when you see his work, you recognise that here is someone who is fearless to follow his own vision, something that I would always aspire towards.

**It's not easy to edit one's own work. A mentor is invaluable, to guide, recognise and correct.**



⌚ I prefer working with a kit zoom lens as even the most subtle of changes in focal length can completely change the foreground-background dynamics.

never visited. And whether you are in an upmarket area or a crowded train, a street filled with college students or an area

full of migrant labourers, you belong. You blend into their life, and they, into your photographs.

⌚ How do I fill every inch of my photo is a question I often ask myself.



Monica Tiwari is a documentary photographer, greatly inspired by cinema. Previously working at 'The Hindu' as a photojournalist, she has received formal training in Photography and Visual Arts from MCRC, Jamia Millia Islamia, and is mentored by photographer Amit Mehra. She blogs at [monicatiwari.wordpress.com](http://monicatiwari.wordpress.com).



# When It All Comes Together

"A picture is usually a moment sliced from time. But life isn't just about one moment, there are several stories happening simultaneously," says Vinay Panjwani, about his effort to photograph the multiplicity of moments that happen in the midst of street chaos.



**T**here is one, and only secret to getting great street photos. You have to shoot every single day, come what may. Even when it comes to shooting something complex, like handling various stories within the same frame, the only technique I can think of, is constant, relentless practice. You have to go back every day

and study your work. Observe where you have gone wrong... even a single character, a millisecond ruins the image.

Mistakes are good though. When a great photograph turns into a complete waste of time owing to a break in concentration, the amount of repentance ensures that I do not repeat the same mistake, when I shoot the next day.

❶ I gravitate towards areas where I know I will find large crowds and multiple elements to play with, and then choose the most interesting character as the hinge.



**• The smallest of elements are crucial, and recognising this is a subconscious act. You need to train your instinct to build it.**

Earlier, if I would shoot a great image, I would be extremely happy for a day, sometimes, for a week, even a month. Now, I'm greedy. The happiness is momentary. I think it is very important for

us to be restless photographers. Our eyes should be looking, seeing, to the left, to the right, in front of us, behind us, all the time. You never know where the next photograph may come from.

**• I do think it may be a good idea to photograph the streets along with a like-minded friend, just so that you have some company during the long breaks when subjects don't come by.**



### On Inspiration

Photographers inspire me more as human beings, as practitioners who share a certain relationship with their medium. For instance, I have always marvelled at the sheer dedication that the legendary Raghu Rai has towards his craft. Even today, at his age and stature, I don't know of anyone else who is so obsessed, so relentless, so passionate and excited, almost childlike, about making photos.

**The street is like a toy in a child's hand. You don't want to stop, *bas, khelte raho...***



**☛ Recognising a strong background is the first step, since the only thing that then restricts you, is your patience.**

Sometimes though, I feel like I'm repeating myself. When people come and tell me that they recognised a photo as mine, I see that as a warning bell.

Style is such a static concept. You need to surprise yourself. If you have a style, a pattern, a formula, you are in trouble. Photography is not formula.

**☛ The key to multiple elements not merging is concentration.**



Vinay Panjwani is a photographer based in Ahmedabad. He practises several genres, but his heart, he says, resides in the street. The 28mm is Vinay's favourite focal length, to make sense of the chaos that often surrounds him on the street. His work can be seen on his Facebook page at the link <https://goo.gl/vbm1qm>.



I saw the mirroring of 'conceptual' elements on the left side and real-world elements on the right. Christ juxtaposed with the church, and the three crosses, which needed the three wandering souls to come by and complete the mirroring, for which I waited for half an hour.

# A Feeling for Place

"I am a little uncomfortable talking about my own pictures," admits **Manu Thomas**. "I would rather that my vision evolve over time, in a way as organic as possible."





Street photography is not just about people, but also places. The place is the backdrop to your story and probably the most important character within it.

**M**ost of my street photography work has been done in Bombay and Kerala. One may say that my Bombay photos are more complex with layering, fore-middle-background structure and organisation of spaces and juxtapositions. The Kerala photos, on the other hand, are perhaps a little

more subtle. At one level though, I have also sought quieter moments within the chaotic urban spaces of Bombay. I don't know... maybe I was looking for Kerala in Bombay. Most of all, I am interested in the underrated ordinariness of everyday life, staged on an ever-changing backdrop, which could become really valuable as it disappears into the past. It's not easy

My photography is largely between 28mm and 35mm, though I prefer the 35mm, as it allows for a more measured, contemplative approach, rather than a combative one.



#### On Inspiration

Stephen Shore's contemplative approach towards the street and the lack of dynamism is something I love. I am also drawn to Hin Chua's subtlety and Carl de Keyzer's use of flash, especially in his work shot in India. Garry Winogrand and Raghubir Singh are the other obvious suspects, who have been huge inspirations.

Instead of mere layers of composition, I look for layers of meaning. And for that, you need to be sensitive.



Street photography is not a genre, it is a philosophy. It is not indicative of location, of 'streets' per se, you could use a streetesque vision, where you are.

to describe this... pressing the shutter is a photographic instinct, a reflex, a compulsion, you don't know why you have to do it, but you know you do.

I respond to the complexities and simplicity of what I see intuitively. I guess my vision adapts with the place more than it does with time.

You may press the shutter, and only later find out why you did so. If you wait to understand, the moment will pass.



Manu started photography in 2007, in Bombay. After struggling with the visual complexities of the city, Manu says that the city pushed him to its outskirts, the relatively quieter seaside and suburbs, where he had more success, probably as it resonated with his origins, in Kerala. His work can be seen at [www.manuthomas.com](http://www.manuthomas.com).



76



Street photography is the ultimate celebration of strong single images, but sometimes, you may spot a thread or a story within those singles.

# Following the Light

“The shadows are often more important,” says Arindam Thokder, as he talks of finding order in chaos, and making compositions, using light.

**L**ight, colour, shadows and shapes... these essentials are integral to my practice. When I photograph a vibrant street where multiple things are happening at the same time, light becomes a filter, as it allows me to highlight some elements and obscure others.

Alex Webb, of course, is a master of using light as a compositional tool, and his influence on my photography has been immense. When you look at his work, you will realise that he seeks a play of light and shadow that almost looks like geometry, and then seems to wait

A fun element of shooting in the afternoon is when your own shadow comes up, which you can then use as a compositional element, and as a self portrait!





Using strong colour (or any other aesthetic) is an easy way to make an 'attractive' image, but it's only a few moments, from hours and hours of shooting, that will give you the truly special moments.

for the right kind of subject to fall into place within this graphical light-shade interplay. Studying his work, and that of other masters, is something that every street photographer must do, so that we are armed with the knowledge of what's been done in the medium.

Of course, influences are hard to shake off, but it's essential that we all do, so that, in the process, we discover our own voice. For instance, I realised that a lot of my images were incorporating large groups of people trapped within light and shade.

But to move away from that, I am trying to now see how I can convey the essence of the street without including any people.

#### Recognising Frames of Light

Observe light, even when you are not carrying your camera. See how shadows are darker at certain times of day. That is why I usually shoot in the afternoon, and not in the morning. Considering the kind of aesthetic I enjoy, I yearn for deep, dark shadows and light in the bylanes of Bangalore is like this only at around 3-4 pm.

#### On Inspiration

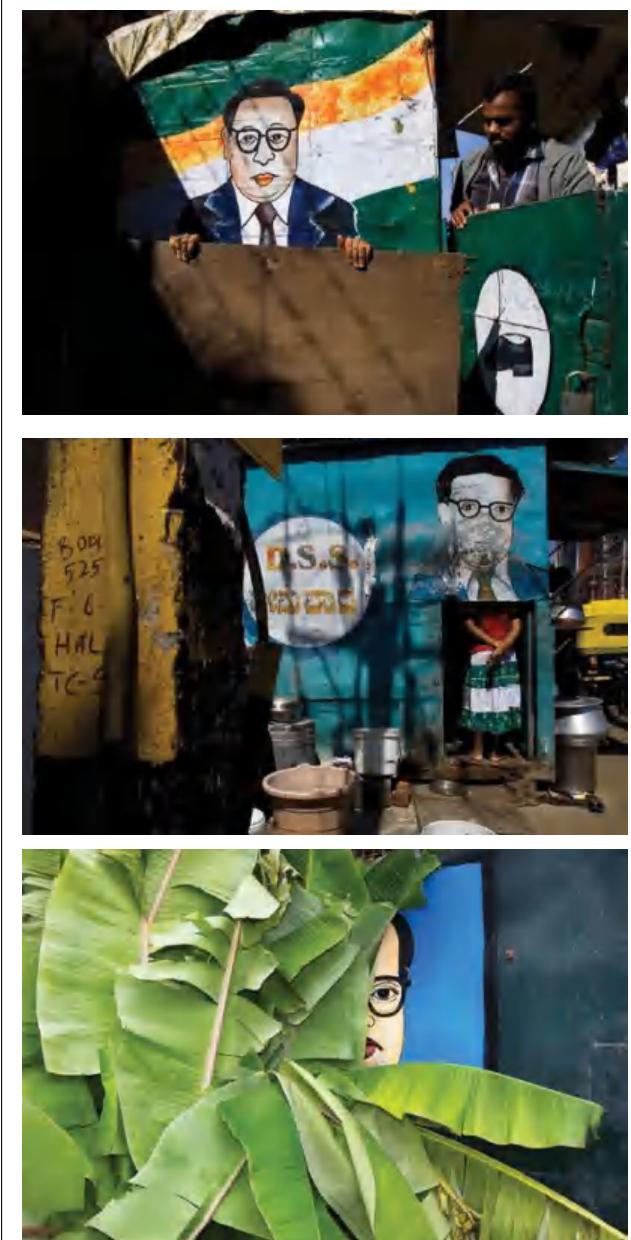
Besides Alex Webb, the great Raghubir Singh has been a huge influence on my street practice. My heart is in colour, and the way that Raghubir used colour, at that time, in the Indian context, has me astounded every time I go through one of his books.



**Going back to your old photos and discovering patterns, mistakes, coincidences, is greatly rewarding.**

### The Power of Three

Handling multiple elements needs you to be adept at 'layering', which is, probably, a little like solving a problem. I first decide what part of the scene I am most interested in. Is it a boy on a cycle? Or the man talking on the telephone? Then, I look for a secondary and a tertiary character, to form a trinity of information, so that the viewer's eye can travel across



the frame. The first character should be the lead, and the secondary character, the supporting role. The third one would be someone who doesn't seem to add any value to the image, but in his absence, the photo would have lost some impact. This may all sound laboured and calculative, but with practice, it becomes a part of your subconscious decision-making process.

➲ I am deeply fascinated by smaller, local stories, plenty of which I encounter during my daily walks in Bangalore. Photoessays get compiled over time, like this documentation of Ambedkar's influence in our daily life.

*An Exchange Administrator by profession, Arindam Thokder's main interests are documenting social issues and conflicts, charitable aid and travel and cultures of various parts of India. But it is street photography that inspires him the most. His work can be seen at [www.flickr.com/photos/arindam\\_thokder](http://www.flickr.com/photos/arindam_thokder).*

SHOOTING TECHNIQUE



# A Reflection of Life

“My painting has influenced my photography, and vice versa,” says **Subrata Biswas**. “Every art we practise or admire tends to influence the other, and that’s beautiful.”



**W**hen we were small, the local television network in Calcutta would show Satyajit Ray's movies, which I would watch with child-like fascination. Years later, when I started painting, when I started appreciating composition, I realised

that every frame of every Ray movie is a photograph. While developing my street and documentary aesthetic, I have been greatly influenced by the framing devices that Ray would use. Apu's gaze, his reflection in the water body, the whole idea of not showing the character directly... when

Colour versus B&W should always be a deliberate, measured choice. Elaborating further, including a particular colour, or to print a certain tonality, is also a crucial decision.



**➲ The whole idea of waking up with the city is what fascinates me most about photographing the streets.**

#### On Inspiration

Henri Cartier-Bresson and James Nachtwey have been indomitable influences on my work. Lately, Roger Ballen's work has struck a great chord with me. His use of drawings as leitmotifs, the suspension of reality, the whole idea of 'documentary fiction'... it's inspired me to ask myself how I can find the surreal within the real, a nagging thought that has led to images like the clock portrait, on the right.

I come from a painting background, and street photography, for me, is where composition meets emotion, where art meets heart.

• I prefer working on long-term documentary projects that have a street-inspired aesthetic, combined with a prolonged engagement with the subjects.



the grandmom narrates the story, you see a stark shadow of her profile, when she passes away, you only see a pot breaking. Street photography has a lot to do with

symbolism... what do you show, what do you not show, the choices you make will eventually decide whether you become a true auteur.

• Every city has its own rhythm, recognising which would help you preempt moments.



Engineer, painter, photojournalist, documentary photographer, Subrata Biswas wears plenty of different hats, some, at the same time. You can see more of his photography and painting work at [www.subratabiswas.com](http://www.subratabiswas.com), and on Instagram (@subratabsbsws).

# Falling into Place

“How do I know when I have shot a good picture? That’s a difficult question with a simple answer,” says Swapnil Jedhe. “When I like it.”





A successful street photo is often one that asks questions, where you wonder what you're looking at, until you realise that the answers actually lie within the image.



**The moment is one moment, not a series of continuously shot hits and misses.**

**Economy of vision is crucial for me.**

**S**treet photography is that one genre where you are the storyteller and the listener, both at the same time. It's the story of life that you are witness to, and you see it unfold, one twist at a time, as everything comes together in that rectangular space you choose to isolate from the rest of the world.

#### Composition and Design

I am fascinated by ambiguity, by not knowing the story completely or not revealing all of one's cards. But coming

from an advertising background, I also appreciate cleanliness and simplicity. I don't like clutter. Minimising is how some of the best photographs are made. In fact, a design background also helps you minimise while still including maximum elements. For instance, if I look at a thumbnail and can appreciate a photo, I know that the image is working graphically.

How does one manage multiple elements? Frankly, the only answer is practice. One technique I find useful is to focus my energies on one element, keep it

#### On Inspiration

I admire Trent Parke, Alex Webb, Swapan Parekh... I particularly like the work of Gueorgui Pinkhassov, his mastery of light and pattern, and particularly the way he uses the colour red.



➲ Recognising the primary element is half the battle, after which, working the frame is like a football game, where you manoeuvre your passes until you score the goal.

constant within the frame, and then wait for the other elements to fall into place.

#### Travel and Explore... Freshness Helps

When it actually happens, it's a little like magic. For me, the joy of street photography is the fact that the environment is always changing, it's always a new day. In fact, I rarely go back to a spot... I want to be surprised.

*When not at work at an advertising agency where he is an Art Director, Swapnil Jedhe focuses his creativity on exploring the hidden art within our mundane lives. You can see his work at [www.swapniljedhe.com](http://www.swapniljedhe.com) and on Instagram (@swapniljedhe).*



# Looking for Authorship

“Street photography is not a one-way street,” says **Prasad Mahale**, “it’s a maze that leads you to unexpected journeys. How you traverse them is based on who you are.”

There is a very thin line when you think about the spatial boundary in street photography. An interesting moment, composition, story can appear anywhere as long as one is in the zone.

**B**eing a Program Manager for a bank, my day job is stressful, leaving very little time for me to relax. Street photography, for me, is a relaxant. As you know, the practice is itself a time-consuming activity that demands great patience and guarantees extremely low return of investment. However, there are fringe benefits. It gives me a chance to observe keenly, derive personal interpretations and notice fun situations that are not openly evident.

Basically, something that can be seen by the naked eye, but cannot be perceived without an open mind. To paraphrase something I had read a long time ago, street photography is about finding the drops that sparkle in the sea, from the countless other drops that are dull.

## The Most Versatile of All Genres

The best thing about street photography is that there isn’t one street photography. It’s a genre that virtually includes every other genre,

### On Inspiration

Joel Sternfield, Bruce Davidson, Jessica Todd Harper, Kate Kirkwood, Raghubir Singh, Raghu Rai and from other genres, Bill Cunningham. And *Breaking Bad...* there are so many movies and shows where you can pause any frame and view a lovely street photo. The latest such movie I saw was *Masaan*.





• I believe that prime lenses help you get in the zone faster. There's one less variable in the process.

and influences the way you photograph other subjects, as well. I personally started with street portraiture, moved onto a lot of juxtapositions, then got really in your face, and then realised

that none of this was me. That's when I started treasuring the photos that were made instinctively, ones with a bit of humour, where dots could be connected to make a story. ▶

• Walk. Wander. Explore. Surrender. The best way to find yourself in street photography, is to lose yourself.

**The great Garry Winogrand was described as 'an undisciplined mixture of energy, ego, curiosity, ignorance and street-smart naiveté'. If you are scared of photographing in public, take Garry's advice and 'play an ignorant tourist'.**



## SHOOTING TECHNIQUE

Street photography is a solitary pursuit, almost meditative. Shooting in large groups is a strict no, more so as it's disrespectful to the local people around.



Our perspective depends on our personality. That again is true for those who are impartial while shooting and not trying to recreate something that they have seen elsewhere. After all, it's highly probable that we start looking for shadow-highlight patterns after observing Alex Webb, start looking

for dogs doing stuff on watching Elliott Erwitt, invade space on watching Bruce Gilden. It is easy to get influenced by great work, but great work is usually great, because even if it has been born out of influence, it has eventually been shaped by the personal vision and identity of the photographer.



Prasad Mahale was born and brought up in Nagpur and is currently based in the United States. He has been practising street photography since the past seven years and has his work online at [www.flickr.com/photos/mahaleprasadz](http://www.flickr.com/photos/mahaleprasadz).



The streets are always cluttered, but I personally gravitate towards simpler frames.

# 92 From the Heart, Not the Head

“I cried to get my first camera,” says a visibly sheepish Vinod Babu. “This was a few years ago, when I was studying in college, and needed to convince my parents for the same. Now, it has changed my life and I allow my emotions to rule my photography, as well.”

**• I enjoy using multiple elements so that I can convey relationships by layering them.**

**A**round a couple of years ago, I was going through a bit of a personal tragedy. I had just gone through a breakup and was not in a good state of mind at all. All my friends, my loved ones, were concerned as to how I'd get out

of it. That is when I came across one of Raghubir Singh's photographs, from his Ganges work, the iconic image of the kid jumping into the river in the Hanuman-like posture. I was so taken in by that photograph that I don't know what came over me.

I packed my bags and decided to travel to Benaras, to make some pictures. My non-photographer friends accompanied me, as they were worried that I was depressed, but every morning, I would just set off on my own. I would wander randomly, hopelessly, not knowing which turn I was going to take, only allowing my camera to decide that for me. It was cathartic.

Street photography diverted me from my personal agony. It's a little like medicine, perhaps. And this applies to all of us, whether we are happy or sad, nervous or excited. When we walk the



## On Inspiration

Mary Ellen Mark's work, especially her documentation of Indian circuses, is something I feel strongly for. The empathy, the connect, the sentimentality within every frame, despite the fact that she is not from here... that's what we should aspire from every street photo. I am also a huge admirer of Michael Ackerman's *End Time City*, a perfect example of shooting from the heart.

**“Even if you don’t want to become a street photographer, the street is a graduation course, one that can train you for the rigour required in any genre.”**

➲ **Don’t prejudge the scene and dismiss any photo opportunity.**

streets, nothing else matters. It’s just us, and the subject.

#### Cluttered Minds, Cluttered Frames

You know, sometimes, we overthink these things. Photography is meant to be done, not fretted over. In street photography, especially, if you have too many things in your head, you will not allow yourself to experience the place, not open yourself up to the various surprises that the place may have in store for you. I need to keep my head calm while I’m shooting. If you overthink, you will overlook.

#### Not Just About People

After all, preconceived notions are the greatest enemy of great pictures. For instance, we are always made to believe that street photography is about people. But once, when I was walking with a friend, I came across a huge buffalo, and as I walked across to photograph it, I realised that there was another buffalo, right behind, in the



➲ I always look for a strong foreground element, and try to frame it such that the graphical quality of the photo is enhanced, as is the emotionality.

most graceful of mirror-like formations. That magical moment only presents itself to us if we are willing to accept it. And for that, we need to surrender ourselves to the place completely. It could be any place, any city, any bylane... it does not have to be an exoticised area. I do keep getting bored of cities though. So after a while, I try shift my visual energies elsewhere, by practising some other genre, or by visiting a new place, entering a new street. Of the places I have visited, the only city that has not bored me till now, is Kolkata.







I actually don't like any eye contact within the frame, but at times, it may add to the mood or enhance the juxtaposition within the image.

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95

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Vinod's photographic journey has largely been in black and white, and recently, he has started shooting the streets in colour, as well. "I am afraid of the night," he says, "but can shoot for hours on end, in the daytime." He is pursuing both street and documentary work, and his work can be seen at [www.thatslife.in/vinodbabu](http://www.thatslife.in/vinodbabu).

"Wait... how did that... ah," that's probably the best reaction that a good street photo could instill in a viewer.



96

# Making Something out of Nothing

"I don't photograph on the streets as often as I used to. But then, this is street photography too," says Dhruv Dhakan. "It just happens to be elsewhere... maybe everywhere."

**S**treet photography, and maybe, photography in general, is about asking the right questions. Your photographs can be an inquiry, trying to find out more about a place, or trying to explore the depth of a certain feeling. From the time that I started making pictures, I, too, have tried to ask myself questions as to where this journey is going. It is the tough questions that make you look within and understand your vision.

## Photographs Are Everywhere

Initially, I was very inspired by photographers like Alex Webb and Raghubir Singh. I would roam the streets, seeking colour, identifying interesting moments within day-to-day life. After a while though, the act of going out every afternoon and shooting the streets felt like a routine.

I still love to search for the elusive street moment, but as my photographic interests have diversified, my approach



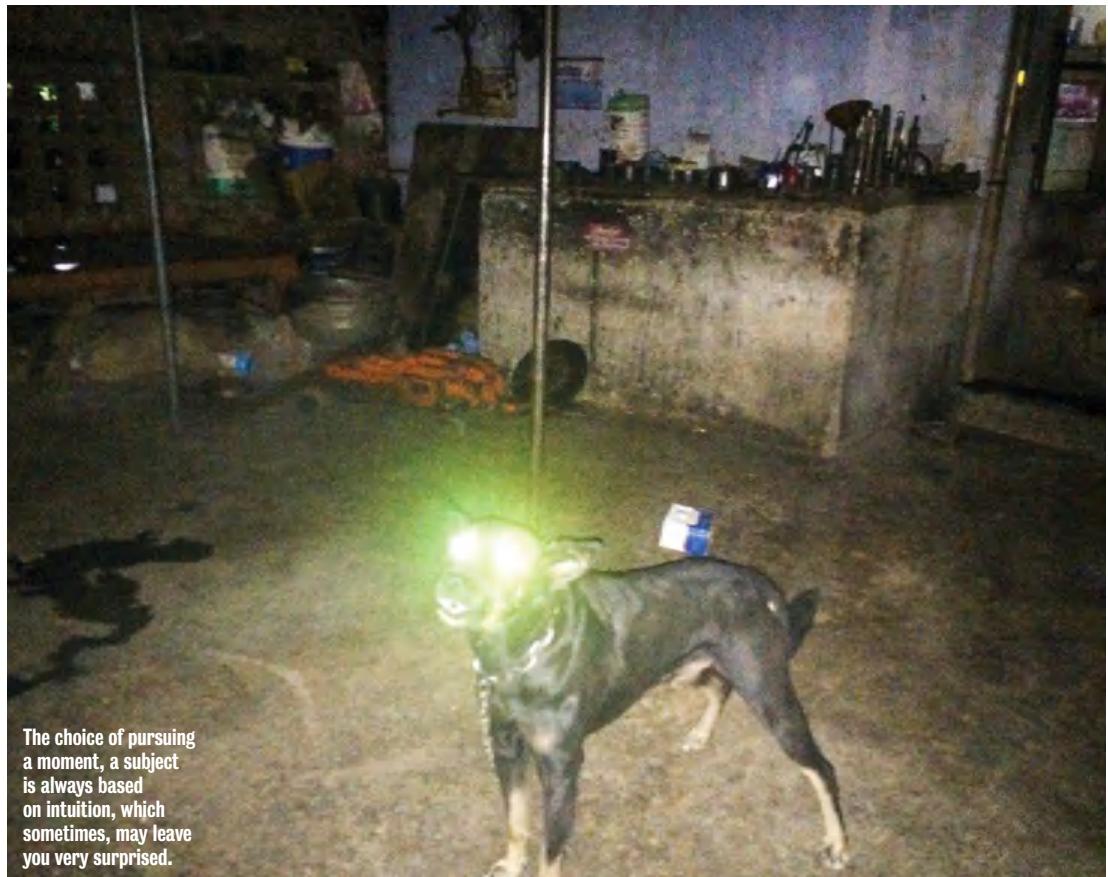
has changed. All I do is carry my camera wherever I go, and not just when I'm walking on the streets. Instead of an active search for photos, it is they who come by, when my eye catches them.

### Mimise on All Distractions, Even Gear

Smaller cameras help, so that your gear becomes a part of your consciousness, an extension of your eye. I now use a Ricoh GR, a small camera with a fixed

Empty frames can be intriguing as they may stir a memory or suggest presence without showing it.

97



### On Inspiration

I am most influenced by the thoughts and practice of William Eggleston. The emptiness within his photos is something that can make you go through such a gamut of emotions, as to how he sees things the way he does. Alex Webb, Harry Gruyaert and Swapan Parekh are some of the other photographers whose work I really connect to.

The choice of pursuing a moment, a subject is always based on intuition, which sometimes, may leave you very surprised.

28mm lens, and also, quite often, my phone. The real transition happened on a day when my dad had asked me to run an errand in a particular building. While climbing up the stairs, I saw a painting that I was really struck by. After looking at it for awhile, I moved on, to enter the office where I had to do my dad's work, but all throughout, I could only think about that painting, and what the frame looked like.

I rushed downstairs as soon as the errand was done, and looked again. The wall seemed like a canvas, and the colour-strip design, like the artist's palette that he had used while creating the painting. I made a picture. It was of nothing, really, but there was something.

Maybe I am attracted to boring subjects. Things that other people may not feel like shooting, things that even I would ignore, at most times. Unlike conventional street photography, I seek silence, rather than the chaos and activity of a quintessential street shot.

### A Journey, Not a Destination

As I photograph the daily goings-on around me, I realise that I am shooting lesser. But there's definitely a lot more clarity, and I am having more fun. Maybe I had to indulge in one kind of photography to appreciate the other. Maybe I will move away from this, at some point, and it's the journey that's most important. **BP**

There are images to be found even at home. All that one needs to do is see.





*A former telecom engineer and web designer, Dhruv Dhakan earlier worked in Dubai, until he returned to Ahmedabad. "I wanted to return as the colour palette of Dubai was so sober, formal and dry. Here is where everything is truly alive." His work can be seen online at [www.thatslife.in/dhruv-dhakan](http://www.thatslife.in/dhruv-dhakan) and on Instagram (@dhruvdhakan).*



ON ASSIGNMENT

History and identity form the core of my work. In fact, the objects that I use for my portraits contain stories from the past, which I then weave together to create new ones.

# Recycled Portraits

There's a lot to be revealed in Nick Gentry's intriguing portraits. See how he transforms and breathes life into the obsolete artefacts that make them.

**The mood that gets created is not preplanned... it's a mystery as to how it happens. I am myself trying to understand how this works. But I'm happy for it to be something beyond my comprehension.**

By using out-of-date materials I have attempted to explore the theme of life and death, by portraying how objects that were once integral to our being have now ceased to exist.



101

**W**hile on a trip to Brazil in 2009, I visited photographer Viz Muniz's exhibition. I recollect being particularly drawn towards a giant world map made up entirely of old computer parts. The magnitude and intricacy of the artwork was astounding, and it wasn't too long after that I began experimenting with creating art of my own, using discarded materials. ▶

### My Assignment

#### Description

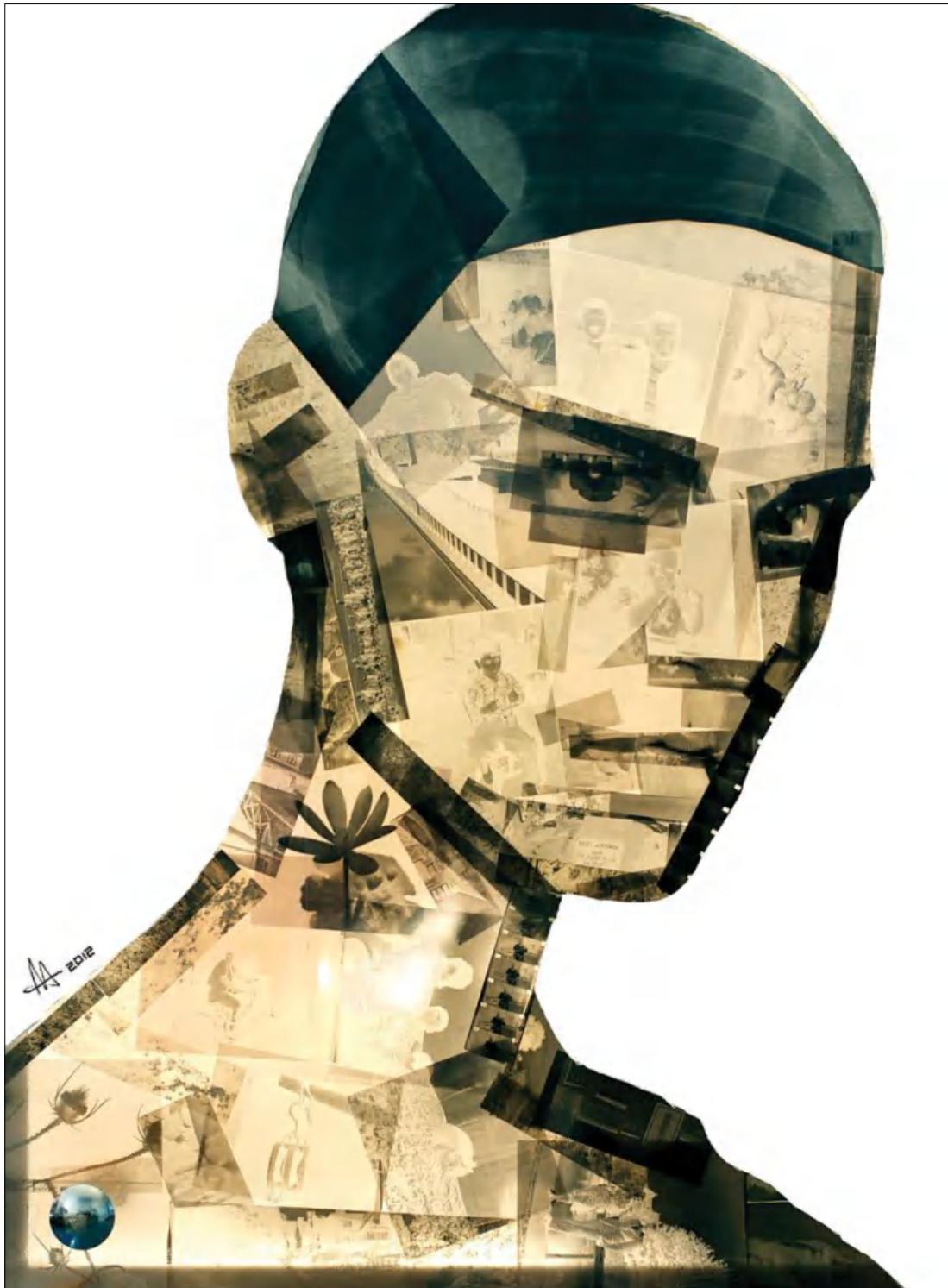
Assembling scattered relics of society into new forms

#### Duration

Ongoing since 2010

#### Notes

All my life I have loved looking at faces, and in a way I've always had a compulsion to interpret them.



Music is an integral part of my working process. In order to infuse the portrait with a certain feeling or emotion, I need my mood to be elevated as well.

### My Perspective

However, the real inspiration came from my childhood. I would spend hours drawing faces of different shapes and sizes. At the time though, I did not know that it would culminate into the complex portraits that I make today. Nevertheless, it was an activity that I found very calming and peaceful.

When I began making portraits using abandoned materials, I started with floppy

disks and CDs. I wanted to resurrect these forgotten objects and display them in a new light. At the same time, I also wanted to make a comment on how far technology has evolved in just a span of a few decades. Eventually, I moved on to film negatives because of the unique fragments of history and memory that they contain, and which cannot be copied infinitely like in a DLSR. That's what I love about it.

It occurred to me that some of these objects that were once considered integral to our lives, now represent something else entirely. With the pace of change, it seems we can reach a point where the meaning of an object is in total flux.

### My Equipment

I use a Canon EOS 6D with a fixed 50mm lens. The combination is perfect for shooting my portraits, along with a basic lighting setup in my art studio.

## On Becoming a Better Artist

- **Avoid Redundancy:** Processes are created to maintain a certain fluidity in one's work flow. But it's not meant to be permanent. Don't be afraid to move things around, as this will bring about a much needed freshness to your work.
- **Be Curious:** It's important to maintain a sense of wonder about the world, as it is an infinitely mysterious place. This will definitely have a positive effect on your work.
- **Learning On Your Own:** Very often, we grow up in an environment where we are spoon-fed and told what to do. This can have a negative effect on creativity. It's important that you take the initiative to learn how to do things on your own. Only after this will you be able to think of new ideas and find inspiration.

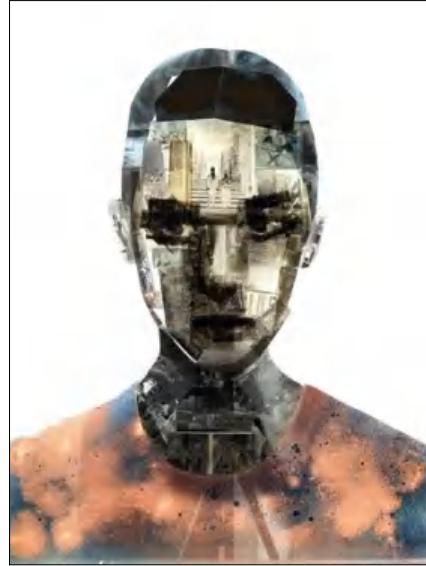
## The Process

I am constantly evolving and redefining how I go about creating my portraits.

After I have sourced all my materials, in this case film negatives, I work with reference photographs to give shape to the portrait. My current approach involves first painting directly on a sheet of acrylic. Then I go on to add the film negatives to this base layer, and later I add more paint as a final layer.

For the features, I used to use oil paint to give them definition and prominence. However, now I create the features using collage. Since there is already so much beauty in the materials, I want them to be the central focus of the work. Then using a very basic lighting setup, I photograph my artwork, so that I can share it later after the physical piece has left my studio.

**➲ In the past, I have used a range of different materials—X-rays, film negatives, computer disks, cables, audio and video cassettes, wood, metal, resin, etc. The choice is always made based on what is most appropriate for that given artwork.**



➲ When using floppy disks to create my portraits, I used to obscure the eyes, as I felt that it would otherwise be too revealing. This has changed over time, but I am still interested in that initial concept.

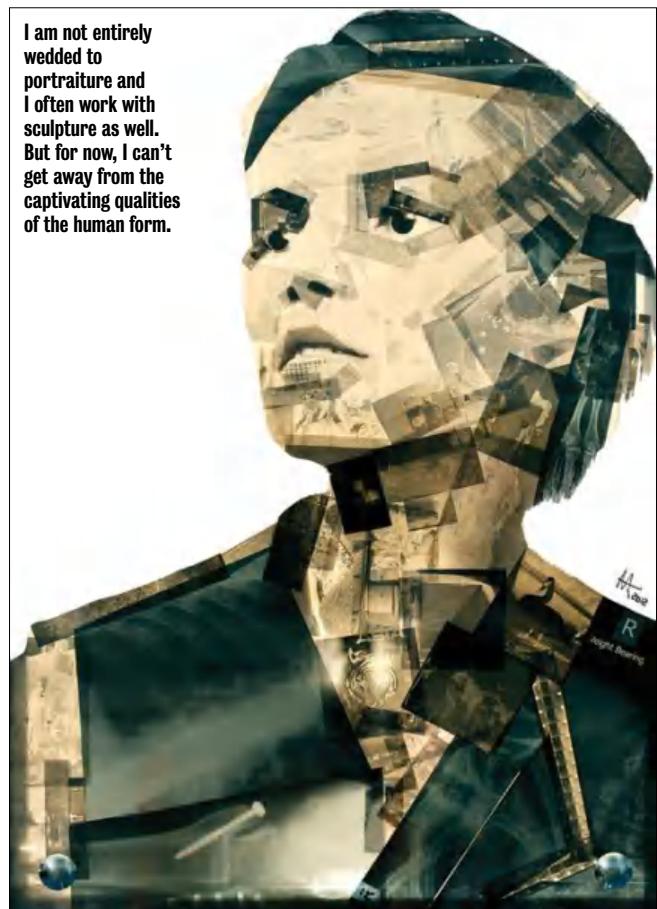
What I like about working with film is its haunting and mysterious quotient, and the way it makes the viewer curious enough to come close and see what's happening in each scene. It's this inquisitiveness that fuels my work and inspires me to create more art. ☺

— **As told to Conchita Fernandes**

To view more images from Nick's work, you can visit his website [www.nickgentry.com](http://www.nickgentry.com)



I am not entirely wedded to portraiture and I often work with sculpture as well. But for now, I can't get away from the captivating qualities of the human form.



# ShowCase

104



## Rigours of the Moment

**S L Shanth Kumar** derives joy in the ardour and angst of process, and in finding frames in the commonness of life, as **K Madhavan Pillai** discovers.

**S L Shanth Kumar**  
• 29-year-old Shanth has become known in the photojournalistic circles for his off-beat single street photos.  
• He is the winner of the *Better Photography* Photographer of the Year Award in 2011, receiving the award at the hands of Raghav Rai.

**W**ading waist deep in the effluent choked, marshy mouth of the Bandra creek, Shanth waits patiently, ignoring the nauseating stench. On the railway bridge overhead, a train passes thunderously. He raises his camera, but the timing is not right. He waits, hoping that the elements will all come into play in the scene before him.

Another train hurtles down the tracks. On the adjacent bridge with a parallel railway line, a thin, barebodied boy, possibly from the slums nearby, suddenly appears, almost silhouetted against the morning sky. He clammers onto the narrow railing of the bridge, stands there in a momentary balancing act, poised like a dancer, and then flings himself exultantly into the sunlight and into the murky

GREAT MASTERS

**Walker Evans**

An essay on his  
enigmatic life

110



1000 WORDS

The best images  
from the media  
in the past month

116



YOUR PICTURES

The best photos on  
the theme 'My family'  
sent in by your readers

118



waters below. Shanth's camera has been busy. He captures it all.

"I end up having to buy a pair of jeans every week, a new pair of shoes every month. I keep ripping or dirtying them beyond salvage. Luckily, my wife keeps them stocked," says Shanth.

### The Long Road Past

A Senior Photojournalist with the Times of India, Mumbai, at the age of 29, Shanth has done well for himself by any yardstick. And yet, his position belies his humble beginnings as an orphan in Chennai. Dropping out of school to support himself ▶

105  
In releasing the shutter, Shanth distinguishes between instinct and practice. Two brothers share a happy moment while feeding pigeons.

There are many ways to plan where to go for street photography. Watching the tides and weather forecasts are some of them. A dog and his master enjoy the sea lashing onto land.



• This is a part of an ongoing photo series on sleepers in Mumbai. Workers catch a nap in the middle of day, amidst all the bustle and noise of Mohammad Ali Road in Mumbai.

**“Is there a technique for capturing love? Love is in the eyes and in the expressions on faces. It is in the bodies of people. That is what I look for and that is what I see.”**

◎ The simplest trick in the book is to find the right background and light, and wait for things to fall into place. Getting it perfectly right is not as easy as it sounds. A police constable walking during a CPIM protest at Azad Maidan, Mumbai.

at the age of 15, Shanth worked in a pest control company (from where he was fired because he was too young), as a tea boy at a photo studio, a darkroom assistant, a video light boy, and a videographer for Rs. 75 a day, and as a studio photographer for passport photos and family portraits.

“At the time, I would have done just about anything to survive. Photography was just that... a way to eke out a living. But I was bursting with questions and learning all the time,” says Shanth. As time passed, he got a job in one of Chennai’s biggest photo labs, where he began seeing the work of other photographers.

It was here that Shanth met Amalnath Benedict Kumar, a photographer with the Times of India, who found Shanth to be a curious, enterprising young man and offered him a job at the small photography company he had just started. He recollects, “I was with him for two years till I was 19. One day, things turned sour, and we parted ways. I was in tears. I told him that I would be a photographer for the Times of India one day too. Years later, after working for a few magazines in Kerala, and seeing some really, really bad times in between, I joined the Indian Express in Cochin as a photojournalist in 2006. In 2008, the Times of India started in Chennai, and I immediately got a job there. Benedict made it a point to meet me. He hugged me and said... Shanth, you’ve made it!”

#### A Labour of Love

Since then, Shanth won himself a Canon Photojournalist Award in 2009, the **BPPOY** Award in 2011 (his first tryst with Mumbai) and the MCC Wisden Cricket Photo of the



Year Award, also in 2011 (the first Indian to do so). His winning image was displayed at the Lord’s stadium, London, throughout 2011, in a huge size.

Mumbai fascinated Shanth completely. On moving to the city, Shanth’s street photography took on new dimensions. In the past 10 months, in 2015, over 400 of Shanth’s photographs, primarily from Mumbai’s streets, have been published by the Times of India, which is a record that will be tough to beat.

“It is not easy for me to explain how I get the images I do, even to myself. Of course,

#### GADGETS & GEAR

- Shanth currently uses the Nikon D3s and D300s, and is comfortable using a range of lenses from wide to telephoto.
- He insists that the most basic gear is capable of capturing an image well. It remains for the photographer to tell stories the way he sees it.



my past affects the way I see. I have really seen life, experienced the streets, you know? The best word for it is love. I love what I do, and when I see people on the streets loving what they do too, I somehow connect with that very deeply. I do not choose my subject. My subjects appear before me," says Shanth.

Of course, things are never that easy. Shanth's love for the streets sees him religiously shoot everyday for at least three hours. Regardless of when he sleeps, he wakes up in time to get to wherever he needs to be by 5:30am. "After a cup of *chai* somewhere, I start walking. I shoot

continuously till about 8:30am. Most of my photography happens in these hours," he explains. It does not end there. Shanth will do whatever it takes to get the shot. Climb trees. Jump over walls. Wade through gutters. Go chest deep into the sea. Or very often, wait for hours at the same spot. Or keep going back to that spot day after day, until he is satisfied.

"I am not a technical photographer. In fact, I still do not know what the third rule is all about," says Shanth, implying the rule of thirds. "Tell me, is there a technique for capturing love? Love is in the eyes and in

► A photographer must be willing to do unusual things to get a different perspective with common subjects, including wading chest deep into the sea and braving the waves during Ganesh Visarjan.



● **Finding happiness in the streets is always wonderful. Children of balloon vendors play under the Bandra bridge, Mumbai, while their parents take a nap.**

the expressions on faces. It is in the bodies of people. That is what I look for and that is what I see."

Shanth's technique is different. It involves a lot of study by looking at hundreds of images by other photojournalists, for up

to four hours every evening. "I can now recognize photographers from around the country and the world by their styles. It helps sharpen my perspectives. But rarely do we actually keep famous images in the back of our minds when we shoot, do we?"

● **Keep an eye out for humour and one usually finds it in everyday situations. A handler bathes his horse on a summer afternoon in the sea at Worli, Mumbai.**



#### TIPS BY SHANTH

- Treat photography in the way it is meant to be treated, as a passion. You will know what I mean only when you start regretting the days you do not get to make a picture.
- There are no compromises in photography, for anything. If you cannot execute your vision now, you need to find out how to get it done in the future. The minute you change your vision to suit your existing situation, you have just compromised.



One of the frames from a feature story on a railway motorman who saved the life of a young girl. The moving train in the foreground is symbolic. On assignment, the images need to tell stories interestingly.

What lies in the future? He thinks for a few second before answering. He shrugs. "I am not sure. I know I will be shooting tomorrow. Beyond that, I want to work with

some of the leading agencies, travel a lot, see places." In a sense, life is simple for Shanth now. The camera, the subject, and getting the shot. Few other things matter. **BP**

A boy jumps off a railway bridge into the Mithi river in Mumbai. Knowing the city always helps in getting the photo.

109



6th Avenue, 1929.



Image Source: The J. Paul Getty Museum

110



Image Source: Library of Congress

(1903–1975)

# Walker Evans

The American landscape took on a different character through the eyes of Walker Evans. Conchita Fernandes peeks into his life and finds out how.

When you look at photography, past and present, there will always be a group of photographers working against the grain, tirelessly trying to break the thick shell of conventionality. John Szarkowski speaks of one such non-conformist, Walker Evans, calling his work the 'antithesis of art'. This was evident in Evans' choice of subjects which included the vernacular signboards, architecture, interiors of buildings and the people of his America.

This straightforward depiction was reminiscent of the renowned Eugène Atget, and the visuals he created of the buildings and alleyways in Paris. In fact, it was Atget's strength in finding beauty amongst the commonality that struck a chord with Evans.

## Animating the Inanimate

However, this upfront style was very unlike the pictures that photographers were shooting back then (late 1930s and 40s). While Henri Cartier-Bresson was out and about looking to capture the decisive moment, Evans preferred to observe from afar. By nature he was a shy man, and this trait comes out in his *Subway Portraits* (1938–1941). It was deliberately shot during the colder months in New York, as it gave him a chance to conceal the camera in his coat.

Even in this detachment, Evans brought a certain element of wonder to his subjects. Literary critic Robert Penn Warren had this to say about the first time he saw the photographer's work, "Staring at the pictures, I knew that my familiar world was a world that I had never known. The veil of familiarity prevented me from seeing it.

**"Privilege is an immoral and unjust thing to have. But you've got it, you didn't choose to get it and you might as well use it."**



111

Then, thirty years ago, Walker tore aside that veil; he woke me from the torpor of the unaccustomed."

One had to possess the eye to see through and beyond the obvious plainness of his pictures. The closer you looked, the more you unraveled. It was as if his "photographs

quietly animated the inanimate," said Belinda Rathbone in *Walker Evans: A Biography*.

"That his photographs saw through windows and porches and around corners gave them a new dimension and power and even an aura of revelation," she wrote.

► **Couple at Coney Island, 1928.**



**“This attraction of mine to the camera and the graphic product was a blind but passionate response to something I could not really analyse or describe. I knew I had to do it.”**

**Documenting the Depression**  
As Walker steadily continued to build his photographic repertoire in the late 1920s, America came face-to-face with the Great Depression. At the time, *Fortune* was running a series of human-interest stories on the effects of the catastrophe. One such story was to be about white tenant farmers and James Agee, a journalist, was handed the job. Agee agreed to do it under one condition, that Evans accompanies him on the project. Walker was excited by the prospect of being a part of a story that would give him a far greater access to people that he ordinarily wouldn't have dared to approach.

The final outcome was *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* (*Fortune* didn't end up publishing the story), which finally materialised in 1941. It featured a detailed and exhaustive account of the day-to-day life of three cotton tenant farmer families, along with Evans' photographs. However, the book did not fare too well and received mixed reviews. While Agee was criticised for his overambitious approach to the story, Evans' images received moderate reviews. It was felt that his images conveyed what Agee said in 150,000 odd words. The book only sold a mere 600 copies.

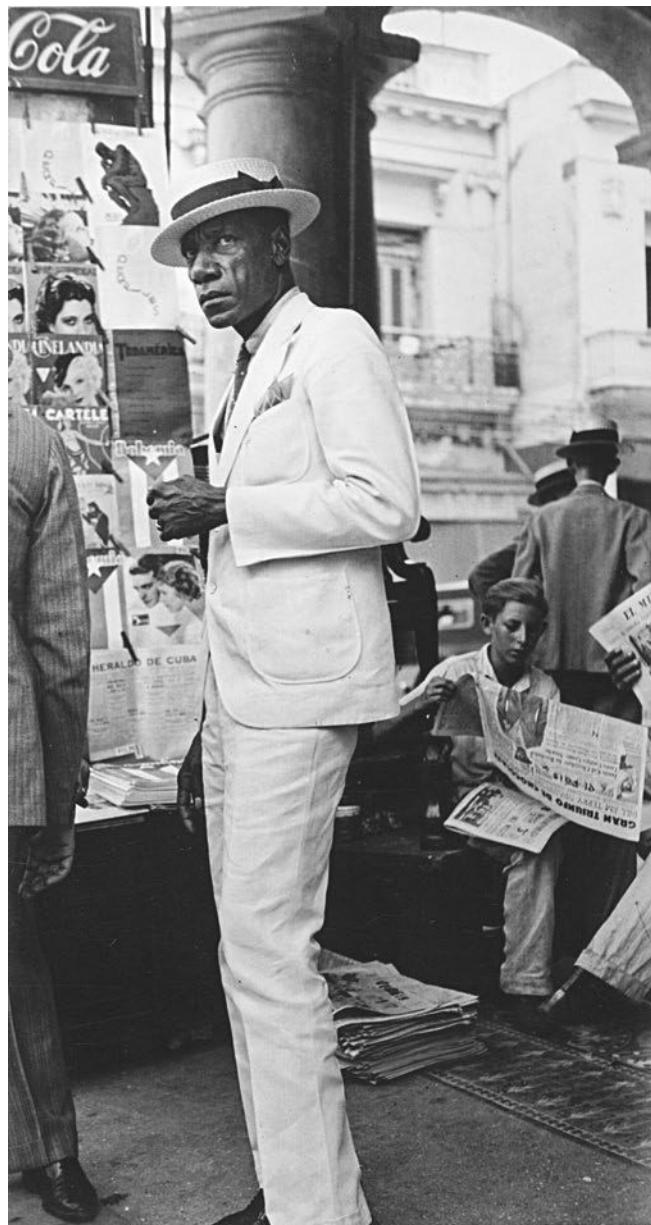
### The Rise of the Phoenix

However, it was only in the late 1950s that people began to rediscover the book, and it was republished in 1960. This time around, people were able to identify the respect that Evans showed his subjects, something that was new for a time when all photographers were dramatising the catastrophe.

Where Margaret Bourke-White barged into her subjects, Evans instinctively took a step back. He preferred to observe or stare as he called it. “Stare, it is the only way to educate your eye, and more. Stare, pry, listen, eavesdrop. Die knowing something. You are not here long,” he said.

### Redemption, But at a Cost

Prior to the second release of the book, it was *American Photographs* that really brought him to the forefront, when it was showcased at the Museum of Modern Art in 1938. He was thrilled about finally being recognised. But even in this exaltation,



113

there was a sharp descent. “He felt tight, suppressed, embarrassed. The show was full of his private feelings, now open to the public,” stated his biography.

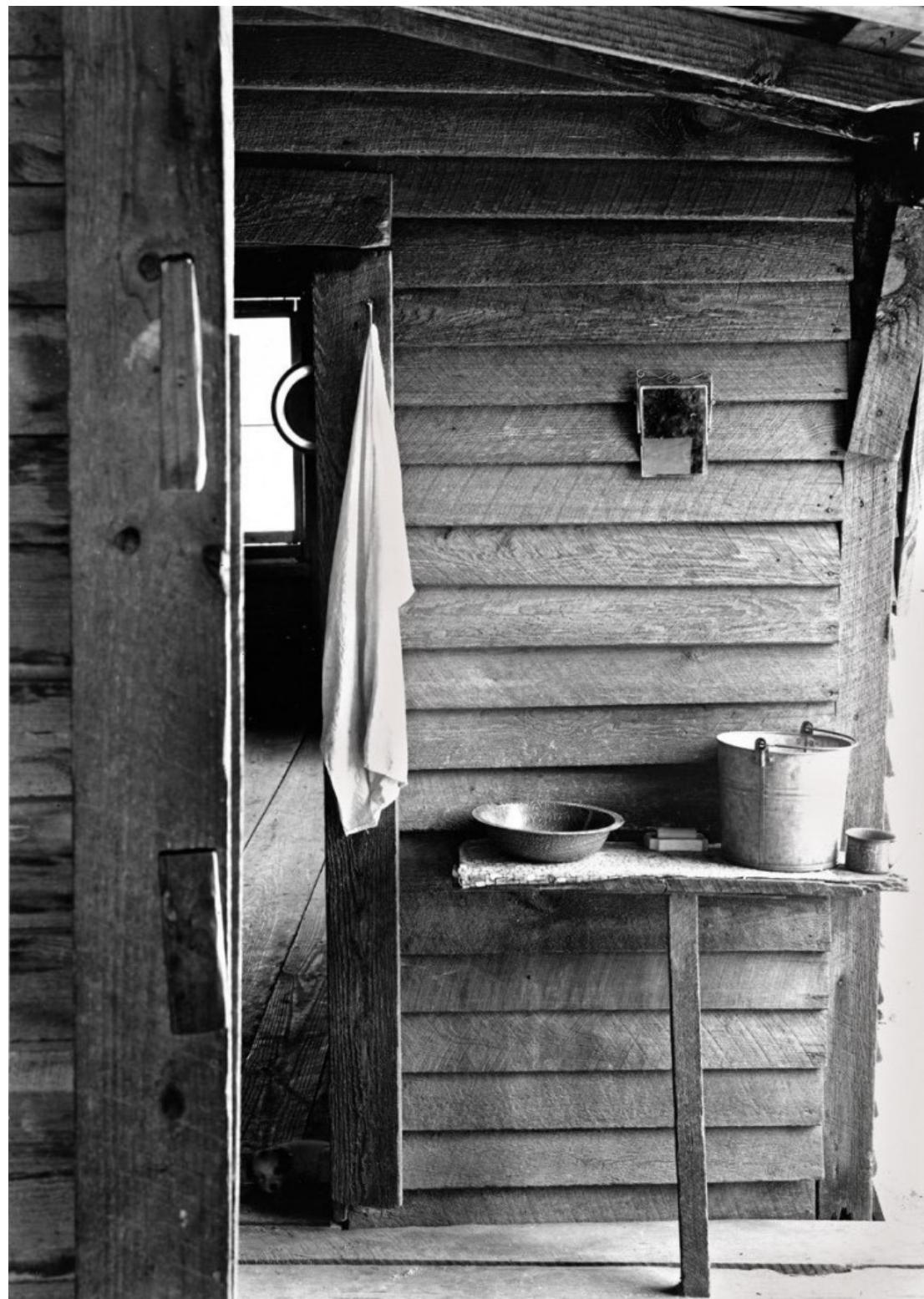
Although the photographs were praised for painting an honest portrait of America, there were those who felt that the country could do without such pessimism, especially since it was recovering from the repercussions of the depression.

Ansel Adams was completely flabbergasted by the work. In contrast to his photographs of the rich American landscapes, Evans' images were a painful blow. In a letter to Edward Weston he said, “Walker Evans' book gave me a hernia. I am so goddam mad over what people from the left tier think America is.” However, Weston felt differently, and appreciated Evans instead. ▶

● **Havana Citizen/Citizen in Downtown Havana, 1933.**

**"I do like to suggest people sometimes by their absence. I like to make you feel that an interior is almost inhabited by somebody."**

114



❶ Washroom in the Dog Run of the Burroughs Home, Hale County, Alabama, 1936.

Two years after the release of *American Photographs*, he journeyed through the same terrain that Evans had along the Mississippi, documenting the ruined plantations.

### A Downward Spiral

As clear-cut, simple and honest as his photographs were, Walker Evans was

immensely complex. He was fixated on having things done his way and expected people to conform. He also felt that the world owed him for all the times that his work went unappreciated. Even *Fortune*, where he worked for 20 years, couldn't keep up with his obscurity. They simply did not know what to do with him.



① Alabama Tenant Farmer's Kitchen Near Moundville, 1936.

### The Eventual Demise

Towards the end, his recklessness finally got the better of him, when he agreed to sell his life's work for USD 1,50,000, a figure his friends felt could have been better worked out. With the assumption that the money would fix whatever was left of his fragmented being, his error soon struck him hard in the face, when he



② Stamped-Tin Relic, 1929.

saw his prints being carted off. This made him very bitter.

40 years after his death, I cannot say for sure if we have completely decoded Evans. The little that we know and from what his images tell, there are more doors to be unlocked. It seems that even in death, he continues to remain elusive and adamant about revealing himself. BP

South Street, New York, 1932.



# 1000 Words

A selection of some of the best images from the Indian mainstream media

116



Praveen Khanna,  
The Indian Express

## The Loss of Innocence

In a horrific incident, a four-year-old girl was brutally raped on 9 October, in the Keshav Puram area of New Delhi. How does one even report such trauma without being horrified at humankind? How does one even portray the loss of innocence? Khanna's photo, shot in the shanty household of the young girl, is a poignant attempt.



## A Swift Exit

BCCI President Shashank Manohar exits the board office, after members of Shiv Sena protested against the proposed talks between him and PCB chief Shahyar Khan in Mumbai. The policemen surrounding the BCCI President create a striking frame within a frame.

Salman Ansari,  
DNA



## The Devil in Pink

In preparation for the festival of Dussehra, a young boy arranges Ravana's masks at a workshop in Mumbai. Despite the abundance of colour in the frame, the image is a somber reminder of how some children don't have the luxury of a childhood.

Farha Farooqui,  
DNA

Datta Kumbhar,  
Mid-Day

## The Last Laugh

Politician and columnist Sudheendra Kulkarni reacts to a photograph of him from the recent altercation with Shiv Sena members who smeared ink on his face for launching ex-Pakistan foreign minister Khurshid Mahmud Kasuri's book. The photo within the photo creates a funny juxtaposition in the moment.

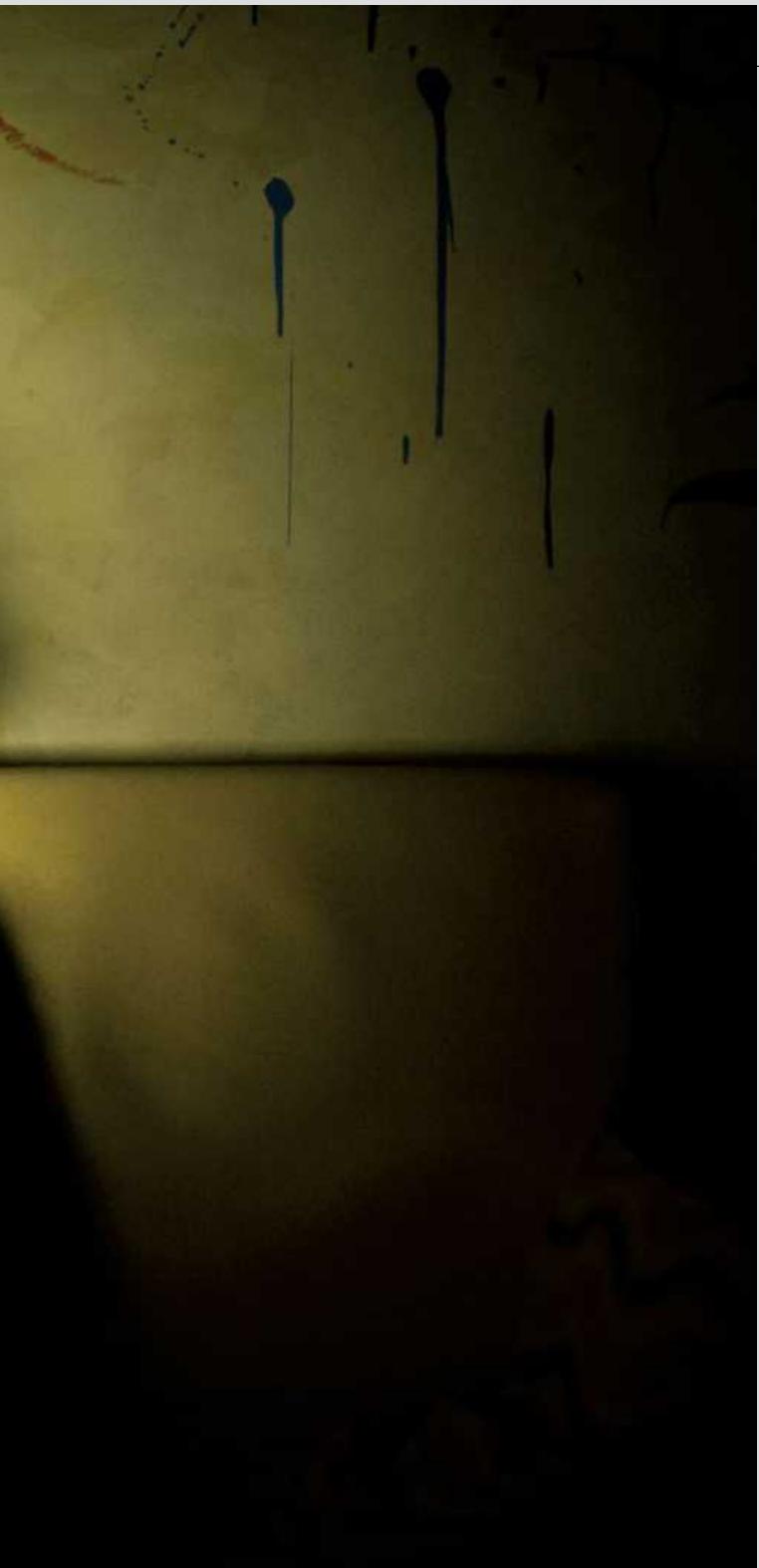


# Your Pictures

This month through the theme 'My Family' we challenged our readers to photograph the closest people in their lives. These are the best images from the contest.

Winner





## ← Of New Experiences

**Ankur Jadhav, Mumbai**  
“On a whim, my 81-year-old *aajii* insisted on learning how to use the computer, and my cousin jumped at the chance to teach her. The moment was so heart-warming, I had to make a picture. The bright light of the laptop screen on my *aajii*’s face looked like she was opening a treasure box.”

**Camera:** Fujifilm FinePix X100  
**Aperture:** f/2  
**Shutterspeed:** 1/30sec  
**ISO:** 1600



## A Stitch in Time

**Nachiket Pimprikar, Thane**  
“I am working on a series of images of my *aaji*, capturing how she spends her time in a day. She was darning her blouse when I made this picture. In a way, the light streaming from the window seemed like a spotlight on her.”

**Camera:** Canon EOS 5D Mark II  
**Lens:** Canon EF 50mm f/1.8 II  
**Aperture:** f/2.2  
**Shutterspeed:** 1/60sec  
**ISO:** 400

## Honourable Mention

### An Infinite Love

**Waleed Shabir, Srinagar**  
 "My grandmother always carries a photograph of my aunt with her; no matter where she goes. I thought this to be extremely endearing, and I knew I had to photograph this sweet sentiment."

120

**Camera:** Canon PowerShot A810  
**Aperture:** f/2.8  
**Shutterspeed:** 1/50sec  
**ISO:** 400



## Honourable Mention

### ➊ Ray of Light

**Neenad Arul, Mumbai**  
 "This photograph is from a series of images I am doing on my niece, Presti. She was born in December 2014, the same month I resigned from my full-time job to pursue photography. Presti means ray of light, and nothing could exemplify it more than her being."

**Camera:** Olympus OM-D E-M5  
**Lens:** Olympus M Zuiko Digital ED 12mm f/2  
**Aperture:** f/3.5  
**Shutterspeed:** 1/1000sec  
**ISO:** 320



## Honourable Mention

### • The Naughty Visitor

Raj Shekhar Das, Guwahati  
"I wasn't around when my niece was born, and I was seeing her for the first time as a three-year-old child. She grew up to be extremely sweet and naughty too. One winter morning, she came into the room wearing these glasses. I quickly made a picture of this amusing moment."

**Camera:** Nikon D3100  
**Lens:** Nikkor AF-S DX 18-55mm f3.5-5.6G VR  
**Aperture:** f/5.6  
**Shutterspeed:** 1/125sec  
**ISO:** 400



121

### Innocent Concern

Manoj Kumar Vitthal,  
New Delhi

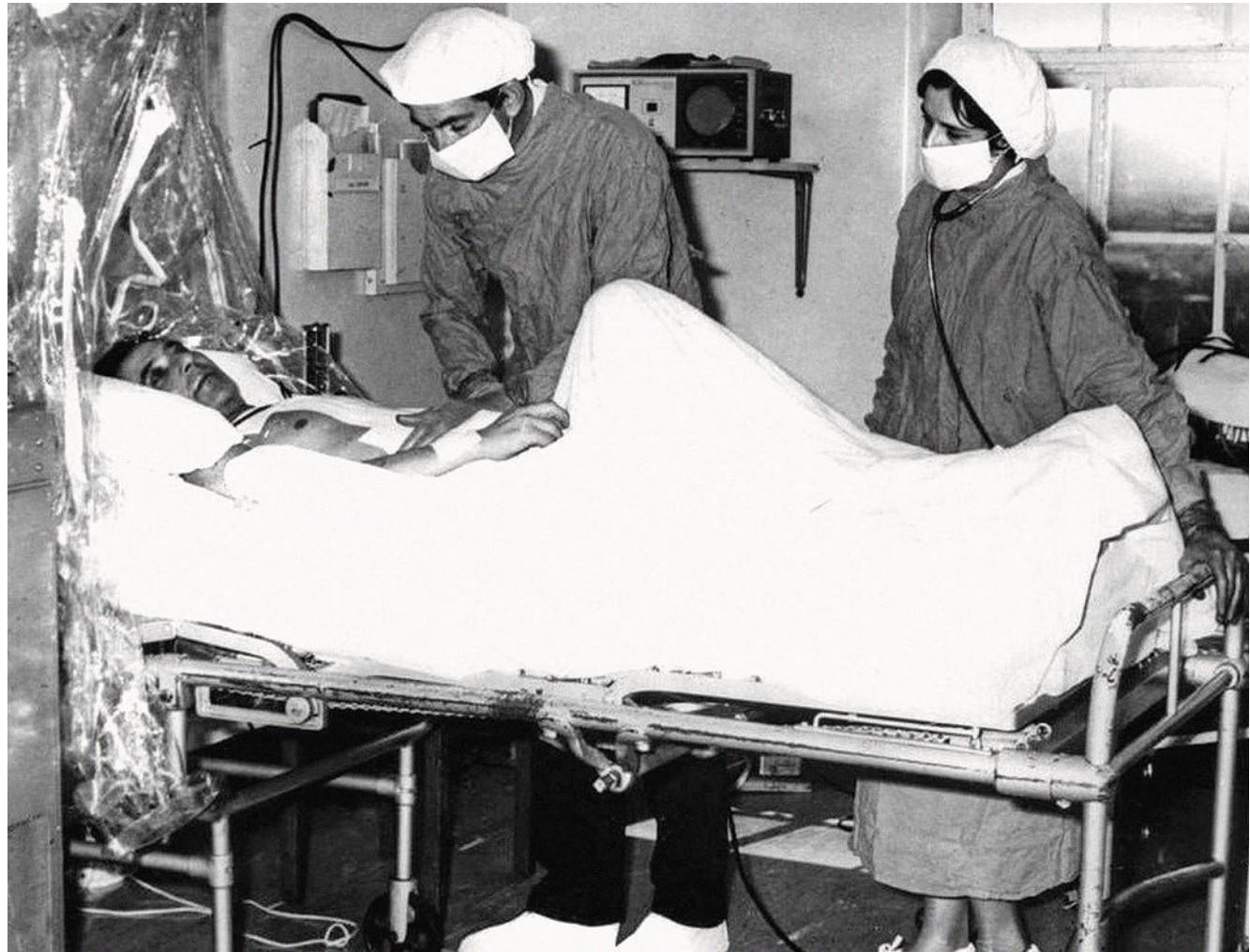
"My little nephew was so concerned about my wife's cold, he started applying an ointment on her nose. The moment was too sweet for me to not capture."

**Camera:** Canon PowerShot SX220 HS  
**Aperture:** f/3.1  
**Shutterspeed:** 1/20sec  
**ISO:** 800

## Honourable Mention

# The Story Behind the Picture

154



*Photograph by:*

Hilton T

*Image Source:*  
GhNDutch Archives

## The Story of the Heart

Some of the most significant photographs in human history only very subtly convey their importance. The above image seems like a non-descript moment from an emergency room at a hospital. However, the image, made by photographer Hilton T, is a moment captured from the world's first successful human heart transplant operation. It features South African doctor Christiaan Barnard attending to his patient Louis Washkansky, a 54-year-old man, who was suffering from diabetes and incurable heart disease.

Dr Barnard had been experimenting with heart transplants on animals, and had achieved success with the same. Performing the same operation on a human being, however, was a totally different matter. On 3 December 1967, assisted by his brother Marius, Dr Christiaan Barnard began the surgery on the patient at Groote Schuur Hospital in Cape Town, South Africa. The heart that was transplanted belonged to Denise Darvall, a young woman who had been rendered brain damaged in an accident. The operation was a success, and laid the foundation for a surgery that has become so commonplace today. The patient, unfortunately, passed away 18 days later due to pneumonia. The longest survivor of a heart transplant by Dr Barnard lived for over 23 years. ■